

# 5 Things That Will Capture Your Child's Heart

Many children may never admit they think their parents are “cool” or “awesome.” God forbid they say that to any of their friends.

But, secretly, they may just believe it in their hearts if see their parents do these five things:

**1. Allow small interruptions.** I've come to learn that even the smallest of interruptions have impact on my little one, and they even give me a moment to refocus.

Whether you're on your computer, working on a project around the house, or even just watching your favorite sports team on television, giving your kids the blessing to interrupt you once in a while is a wonderful thing.

Not only does it show them you care, but it reminds them of how important they are to you, even if the interruption only lasts a few minutes. Time and time again, I've found myself inspired and refocused after leaving my computer to go play ball or blocks with my son, after he's walked up to me with eyes that are just impossible to say no to.

This doesn't happen every time, but I make he sure knows that more times than not, dad is available to play and spend time with, even if just for a moment.

**2. Give your kids individual attention.** My wife and I are expecting our second son at the end of this year and we could not be more excited. But along with this excitement comes the fear of making one child feel less loved than the other. How do we balance our time? What if our older son gets jealous and resentful?

We've realized that we're not always going to be able to live up to our kids' individual expectations in life, but that we can do our best to give each child the individual attention they need on top of spending time with their sibling. This may be exercised by taking one child to get ice-cream with dad while the other goes to the park with mom, or even something as small as doing a puzzle together while the other sibling is taking a nap.

Regardless of what the adventure looks like, each kid is going to be looking for individual attention, and balancing this time correctly is going to make for happy and encouraged children no matter how small the amount of time is.

**3. Constantly remind your kids how much you love them.** I can't begin to tell you how many people I've met who said that they rarely heard their parents tell them they loved them, let alone show any type of affection to them growing up. I was raised in such a polar-opposite environment, and I don't know how I would have responded otherwise. Something about not telling your children you love them just doesn't make sense to me, and I cannot imagine what that must feel like being on the receiving end. Kids need to hear they are loved. Kids need to hear that they are wanted.

There is something so comforting about hearing your mother and father tell you that they love you. And there is something so peaceful and safe-feeling about being embraced with a warm hug. I believe this type of affection truly sets your kids up for success in life, and I wouldn't encourage anyone to parent any other way.

**4. Allow your kids to fail sometimes.** The "everyone is a winner" mentality just isn't a realistic approach to raising kids, and I believe it sets them up for failure in the real world. One of the things I love most about my father is that he allowed me to try things as a kid, even if he knew I was going to fail at them. He'd give me as much wisdom as he

could, and in the end use my failure as an opportunity to learn and grow. These are lessons that I've held dear to my heart for almost 30 years, and I don't know where I'd be today without them.

I remember the times my sports teams would win and my family would cheer like I had just won a gold medal at the Olympics, but I also remember times when we would lose and my father would wrap his arm around me and tell me he was still proud of me and that, "You'll get 'em next time." My parents taught me the valuable lesson that you aren't going to win at everything you do in life, and that's okay. Nobody ever does. You learn from your losses and grow stronger.

Awesome parents teach their kids to lose with dignity and win with humility. There really is no better way to go about it.

**5. Let your kids see mom and dad show affection to one another.** One thing my wife and I are never shy about is kissing, hugging and snuggling together in front of our son. We want him to know how much mommy and daddy love each other, and that we're not afraid to be public about it, no matter how gross he thinks it is as he gets older.

The way you and your spouse model marriage in front of your kids is going to be the model of marriage they hold onto for most of their life. So show them a good example. Don't be afraid to have small arguments in front of your kids, to kiss in front of your kids, and to hold each other in front of your kids. Show them what a real marriage looks like, and don't set them up for failure when they themselves choose to get married one day. I understand there are some conversations and intimate times that are meant to stay behind closed doors, but you get where I'm going with this.

Let your kids see what a great marriage looks like by *you* modeling it for them, not television and movies. Great marriages have arguments. Great marriages include affection

for one another. Great marriages have ups and downs. {eoa}

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## PTL: People That Learn

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PTL evokes few neutral reactions. Millions watch it five days a week and contribute about \$1 million a week to keep it on the air. They love it. Thousands have been saved through its ministry, others healed, and many others given hope. “God loves you: He really does,” PTL host Jim Bakker tells them day after day.

But others are turned off by PTL. They say it’s too emotional, or, they don’t like the frequent appeals for money or amount of makeup Bakker’s wife, Tammy, wears. Some are critical of what they consider PTL’s simplistic well-scrubbed type of you-can-make-it theology.

Baker once told *the Saturday Evening Post* that people “either love (us) or hate (our) guts—and both can be exhausting.”

But whether you love or hate PTL, you can’t ignore it. It is not only one of America’s largest ministries, but it is one of the most controversial. Over the years it has gone from one financial crisis to another. Newspapers constantly chronicle PTL’s shortcomings—real or trumped up. A series of articles by PTL’s hometown newspaper, *The Charlotte Observer* resulted in a

long, expensive investigation of PTL by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) that ended early this year with the FCC clearing Bakker and PTL of any wrongdoing. No sooner had the FCC dropped the investigation than *The Charlotte Observer* revealed on its front pages that PTL had purchased an expensive condominium for the Bakkers in Florida.

In addition to published reports, stories have circulated through the Christian community about internal problems at PTL and about problems in the Bakker's home. These stories about PTL had so intrigued me that when *Charisma* decided to begin its "Television and the Great Commission" series on the major TV ministries I assigned myself the PTL story. I wanted to visit PTL to see first-hand what was happening. I asked for the opportunity to spend a day with Bakker, watching him at work and discussing in depth his ministry at PTL and asking him to answer many yet unanswered questions.

It took several weeks, but finally we settled on a date for me to interview Bakker. As I settled back on my early-morning flight to Charlotte, I went over some articles about PTL I had brought with me and reviewed some other background information my researcher had found.

One article in *The Saturday Evening Post* was entitled "Jim Bakker: Seen By Millions, Known By Few." The subhead-line read: "Not even his live television audiences of loving fans and loyal supporters know the true rags-to-riches story of their PTL Club founder." The article continued: "When Jim Bakker steps out on cue to meet his cheering audience, he leaves any resemblance to the holiness preacher stereotype behind. He has a slick impressive orchestra and fresh-faced, talented singers. He wears designer clothes: his set is comfortable, blue living room facade; his speech is polished and cool, yet as down to earth as the man next door. He is warm. Sincere. Cheerful. Dynamic. And the audience responds. When he jokes, they laugh. When he preaches, they say, "Amen!" When he details the world's woes, they shake their heads. When

he sermonizes, they nod in agreement.”

The article goes on to tell how Bakker was born a “blue baby” and he weighed only 28 pounds at the age of five. He was a shy child who didn’t like sports and who did not make good grades. Then in junior high he was befriended by a photography teacher who taught him to excel—first in photos and then in journalism and speech. As he gained self-confidence he began being a deejay and his popularity soared in school.

Then tragedy struck. Bakker accidentally ran over a young boy while he was playing hooky from church. Even though the boy ultimately lived, during the time in which the doctors did not know if he would live or die the anguished young Bakker committed his life to Christ as he prayed for the young boy’s recovery. After high school he enrolled in North Central Bible College in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he met Tammy LaValley from International Falls, Minnesota. During his second year they were married and expelled from college since there was a rule that students could not marry until the end of the term. They resigned their jobs and began traveling as evangelists. A few years later, they bought some Soakie Bubble Bath bottles with puppet heads and began using them as a means to preach to children. They caught the attention of Pat Robertson who asked them to join his staff at the small Christian Broadcasting Network.

CBN was a training ground for the Bakkers. Not only did they have a children’s puppet show called “The Jim and Tammy Show,” but Bakker was instrumental in starting the “700 Club.” The work and pressure were so much, however, that after a while, his body could take no more and he suffered a nervous breakdown. From there he went to Southern California where he worked with Paul and Jan Crouch of the Trinity Broadcasting Network in their “Praise the Lord” program. Then, in 1972 Bakker went to help in a telethon in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was so warmly received that he was invited to

stay and to head-up the ministry that has become PTL. The ministry immediately began to grow. By 1978 Bakker had become such a celebrity that *People Weekly* magazine called him "The Johnny Carson of Evangelism," and said his program was "the hottest show in religious broadcasting."

In the years since the "PTL Club" went on the air, it has become the most watched daily Christian program in the world. According to statistics from PTL, it is carried on some 220 broadcast stations, daily on more than 180, the program can be seen by 84 percent of the nation.

The "PTL Club" also heads a 24-hour lineup of Christian programming, beamed by satellite into all 50 states on the Inspirational Network. The Inspirational Network began in April of 1978 and by October of 1982 was carried on some 630 cable systems with 6.5 million households by a PTL count. Another million households were added before Christmas and negotiations to serve an additional two-and-a-half million homes are pending.

"The PTL Satellite Network does not include Hollywood movies or reruns of old series," says Bakker. "We offer 100 percent Christian programming from a diverse number of national ministries and program producers."

The ministry of PTL extends far beyond the borders of the United States. Currently, evangelism is being done in 29 other nations by PTL's own missions' outreach or by other ministries supported by PTL.

PTL's foreign productions are hosted by nationals in each country.

Juan Romero hosts the Spanish language "Club PTL" which reaches the second largest viewing audience of all PTL programs. "Club PTL" is broadcast in Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Netherlands Antilles, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.

The French program is called "Entr' Amis" (Among Friends). Hosted by Roland Cosnard, it is aired in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Monaco, and Haiti.

The "PTL Redemption Hour," with Nigerian host Benson Idahosa, reaches into Ghana and Uganda, as well as Nigeria.

Ten stations which cover about 90 percent of the nation now carry PTL in Japan. PTL even reaches into Southeast Asia with the Thailand "PTL Club."

The newest foreign TV outreach is "Tra Amici" (Among Friends) in Italy. The program is broadcast on Tele Monte Carlo, Monaco Italian Network, which has 28 stations and a potential viewing audience of 50 million people.

A pilot program for Great Britain has been produced and air time is being sought on one of the new TV channels in England.

The American version of the program is seen in several English-speaking countries including Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Philippines, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the West Indies, Bermuda, and Haiti. A new PTL-produced program, "Jim Bakker and Friends," is seen in Zimbabwe and will soon be available in Australia and Hong Kong.

With the exception of Nigeria, Japan, and Thailand, all other foreign "PTL Club" programs are produced at the PTL World Missions TV Center in Charlotte.

In addition to its own extensive missionary outreaches, PTL also gives support to a number of foreign and home missions groups. Bakker gives a percentage of each dollar received by the ministry to projects and ministries totally unrelated to PTL. In the last five years PTL has given \$12 million to other organizations spreading the Gospel. (Later Bakker would give me more details. Read his comments on page 47.)

PTL gave funds for the construction of a school for deaf

children in Bolivia, collected more than \$700,000 for missions in India to provide for orphan care, bread and milk-feeding programs, a nursing school, medical equipment and ambulances, and raised \$290,000 for the Vietnamese boat people.

PTL also gives generously to worthwhile charities in the United States, and last year developed a network of People That Love Centers to provide food, clothing, household items, and other assistance to people in need—all free of charge.

A new and rapidly expanding PTL ministry is an outreach to prison inmates. For years PTL provided books, literature, tapes, Bibles, and study courses to prisoners, but last year, at the state prison in McAlester, Oklahoma, PTL dedicated a pre-tuned satellite reception dish which enables inmates to receive 24-hour ministry from the Inspirational Network. The response has been so positive that PTL has set a goal of placing two satellite dishes a month in larger prisons during 1983.

No account of PTL's ministry would be complete without mentioning Heritage USA, home base for the organization. Heritage USA is a total living center geared for the thousands of visitors who come to PTL. It's a family resort that combines camping, deluxe chalets, swimming pools, shopping centers, fishing, family entertainment, and TV shows all in a national-park setting.

On the shore of Lake Heritage, the three-bedroom chalets with full kitchen facilities, stove, fireplace, and living room cost \$59 per night for the first two guests, and \$4 per additional person up to a total of eight people. Rooms at the inns begin at \$26 and run up to \$39, according to PTL's newspaper, *Heritage-Herald*.

For those who prefer to rough it, there are the campgrounds of Fort Heritage, which offer the unheard-of-luxury of bathtubs in the ladies bathhouses. Fees are \$7 for tents, \$8 for pop-up

campers and vans, and \$10 for other vehicles.

Heritage Hall (also called the Barn) is the nerve center. The "Jim Bakker" program is taped before a live audience every morning from its studios. Seminars by evangelists and Bible teachers are held in the afternoons, and Camp Meeting USA, an old-fashioned revival is held each evening.

The Upper Room, supposedly a replica of the one in Jerusalem, was dedicated on July 4, 1982. The ground floor houses prayer counselors for the "Jim Bakker" program. On the top floor is the prayer chapel, where a staff minister is on duty 24 hours a day.

The newest structure is the Total Learning Center which serves PTL's pastoral staff, but also contains an outreach for troubled families. Seminars and workshops for singles, married couples with problems, and families with parent-children conflicts, are planned.

Despite the growth of PTL, its impressive achievements and obvious prosperity, Jim Bakker has had more than his share of critics. The secular press, which is inclined to look with skepticism on any successful religious figure, has had a field day with Bakker. In addition to scrutinizing his every pronouncement, it has attacked with withering sarcasm many of the Bakker's more human foibles—such as Tammy Faye's love of flashy jewelry and the tendency of some to cry on the air.

Attacks on the Bakker's personal idiosyncrasies have been annoying, but they are the price one pays for celebrity status of any kind. It is the hard news articles, questioning the integrity of the ministry and presenting damaging financial statistics that have done the most real damage. *The Charlotte Observer* has been the ministry's main nemesis. While it would probably be unfair to say that the paper has a vendetta against Bakker, it certainly seems determined to keep the heat on him.

It was a series of articles in *The Charlotte Observer* that led to a three-year investigation by the FCC.

In January of 1979 the paper claimed that hundreds of thousands of dollars raised by the ministry for overseas ministries had been used instead to pay bills and finance domestic projects. The amount included almost \$300,000 earmarked for the establishment of a telecast in Korea, hosted by Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church.

*The Charlotte Observer* did not tell the whole story. Bakker raised almost \$300,000 to send start-up equipment to Korea, but then discovered that duty fees would double his costs. Bakker says that at that point he went to Korea and talked to Cho personally, and the two agreed to divert the funds to help launch Christian TV in Japan. When he returned, Bakker went on the air and explained what had happened to his partners.

However, on the basis of *The Charlotte Observer's* articles and questions from donors, the FCC sent two investigators to PTL to look into the matter. In April 1979, the FCC subpoenaed PTL's tapes and records.

The dispute consumed much of Bakker's time and energy for three years. He estimates the investigation and the resulting publicity cost the ministry more than a million dollars in lost contributions. And an audit published by the CPA firm of Deloitte, Haskins, and Sells showed that PTL paid almost \$1 million in legal fees during 1981 and 1982.

In addition, the turmoil demoralized the staff and in one year ten of the network's 14 vice-presidents departed. Of those, six were forced out by Bakker and three left under a cloud. Fired in February 1979, was Jim Moss, PTL's executive vice-president and executive producer who hired Bakker in 1974. Other executives who were forced out included Bill Perkins and Robert Manzano.

In January 1983, the FCC finally dropped all charges against

PTL and referred the case to the U.S. Justice Department for further investigation into any possible criminal charges. But in March 1983, the Justice Department formally cleared PTL of any wrongdoing.

Bakker says that he learned a lot from the ordeal and that PTL is much more careful about its accounting procedures. Until 1982, the ministry operated without a budget and all transactions at Heritage Village took place out of a single checking account.

"We spent the first ten years at PTL just reacting to our growth. It's like building a building and going back after it is built and putting the steel structure into it," Bakker says. "We've made a lot of mistakes but we've learned. We've had the accounting firm of Deloitte, Haskins, and Sells working with us for about five years.

Not all of Bakker's critics have been from the secular press or the government, however. He has also had difficulty with fellow Christians. Denominational pastors, many of whom have seen their own congregations dwindling in recent years, have on occasion lashed out at the TV evangelists, accusing them of drawing the faithful away from the church.

To them Bakker replies, "The electronic church is challenging some of those guys to wake up' out there. And once they wake up, we can close the electronic church. I asked an Episcopal priest, 'In all the time that you've been at your church, how many souls have gotten saved?' We're getting them saved."

Others have voiced disapproval of the Bakkers' somewhat flamboyant style—both on and off the camera. Jim and Tammy are very emotional people who have not hesitated to show their emotions on TV. Both are stereotyped as crying on the show, although I've never seen Bakker cry on the show. However, it is Tammy Faye who carries the brunt of the criticism for her heavy makeup, her love of flashy jewelry and clothes, and her

giggling personality which sometimes seems almost silly.

The most severe criticism has not come from their actions on the set as much as from their rather extravagant lifestyles. *The Charlotte Observer* created a furor when it revealed in 1978 that the Bakkers had moved into a \$195,000 house in an exclusive section of Charlotte. Although the house had been purchased by Kentucky businessman Harry Ranier, it left a bad taste in some people's mouths. New revelations this year that PTL had purchased a \$375,000 condominium in Highland Beach, Florida, and had installed a \$11,678 sauna for his use at Heritage USA, reinforced the image of minister making money off the Gospel.

Bakker says the purchase of the condominium was a decision made by the board of directors against his recommendations. (See his exact quote on page 48.) Other Christians—primarily non-Charismatics—have serious disagreements with Bakker's theology which they say presents an unbalanced view of the Christian life. "In television Bakker has found a perfect vehicle for his promises of health and wealth," wrote Philip Yancey in *Christianity Today*. "His message seems to fit the medium. TV is made for packaged promises and easy-to-grasp answers . . . . It is a miserable platform for discussing complexity. and struggle . . . . Inevitably a Christian faith tailored for a TV audience comes across as scrubbed-up, incomplete. . . . Jesus warned the church against temptation, dissension. attacks from outside, lukewarmness, and painful persecutions. Discussing these aspects of the Christian life does not appeal to a large audience, though.

"In short," Yancey concludes, "PTL offers an affirming, upbeat brand of faith, free of many of the negative strictures of traditional fundamentalism ... Bakker grounds his approach in love, not in fear or threats of hell. He is capable of brimstone preaching, but he adapts himself to the 'cool' medium of TV smiling, constantly affirming, 'God loves you and we do too.'"

If Bakker's critics come largely from the secular press and evangelicals, his strongest support comes from Charismatics and Pentecostals. During one of his worst financial crises in 1981, several other large Charismatic ministries, including Kenneth Hagin and Oral Roberts, made large contributions to PTL. When Tammy Faye required surgery last year, she checked into the Oral Robert's City of Faith in Tulsa. Jim speaks warmly of Rex Humbard, and other ministers. Perhaps, having faced many of the same grueling pressures, they have developed an empathy for each other.

Over the years friends who have been close to Bakker had told me stories of how he ran PTL as his personal empire, hiring and firing people almost at will, and beginning new projects sometimes by merely announcing on the air that he felt led of the Lord to do so. Many of the financial crises, they said, at PTL were caused by Bakker's own impetuosity, lack of wisdom, and desire to constantly build bigger and better facilities to placate his own ego.

If Bakker has an ego-problem I can't say so because I don't know him well enough. But ego-problems are certainly an occupational hazard for the heads of large ministries who see their organizations, contributions and influence mushroom, often almost overnight.

As the ministries (and cash flows) grow, the ministry heads often surround themselves with the trappings of power, with luxurious facilities and with adoring staff members. Of course, TV preachers aren't the only ones who have this problem. Hollywood stars, politicians, and even some journalists give in to the heady wine of power, prestige, and the adulation of the public. But somehow we expect a little more of men of God.

Again, I don't know if Bakker is really like this, but stories abound that he has had his share of problems in this area. And, the few times I have been around him, I lumped him into

the class of ministers who did.

Then, several months ago I was at a meeting of pastors of large churches and media ministries and Bakker was there. It was a "peer-level" meeting in which these pastors and heads of ministries could share as peers about mutual concerns behind closed doors.

However, only a few of the large national ministries were represented. The heads of these ministries are all very busy and that is the excuse they give for not accepting an invitation to attend. But usually the real reason—I suspect—is that they are "too important" to meet with peers. Bakker's meeting with these pastors and both answering questions and asking questions, made me think that maybe somehow Bakker was different.

His spirit at that meeting was not haughty as I had come to believe it would be. Instead it was gentle. He shared some of the deep needs in his own life. And, he told how he feels misunderstood, isolated by his brethren, and alone.

Could it be, I wondered, that the problems Bakker has encountered have matured him? Could he have learned some lessons? Had he really changed? It wouldn't be long until I found out.

Just then the limousine turned into Heritage USA with its impressive avenue of flags. I was taken first to Bakker's office on the top floor of the pyramid-shaped headquarters building. When I met him he was dressed in cowboy boots, blue jeans, and a casual shirt. He was sitting behind a large desk in a lavishly appointed office. After exchanging pleasantries, I began to ask him about his day. Already he had a haircut, met with his top financial man and reviewed the Florida condominium story with his public relations man, Brad Lacey.

I asked Bakker to tell me about the first part of his day since I was following him on a "typical day" There is no

“typical day,” he told me. But that day he was up at 7 a.m. in time to have breakfast with his two children—Tammy Sue, 13, and Jamie Charles, 7, before they left for school. His attorney then phoned him at home about some PTL business.

“It used to be that to be an evangelist all you needed was a Bible and a Hammond Organ,” Bakker told me. “Now you need a Bible, a Hammond Organ, and a lawyer.” I then remembered a line I’d read in a *Christianity Today* article about the FCC investigation of PTL in which the writer mused that Bakker was spending so much on legal fees that he must wonder if PTL meant Pay the Lawyer.

Since I hadn’t been to Heritage USA, Bakker drove me around, showing me the campsites, pointing out the chalets along Lake Heritage, motioning toward where the 3,000-seat amphitheater was where they have outdoor shows for guests in the summer. He parked the car and we walked toward the Upper Room. He stopped on the first floor where prayer counselors answer telephones 24 hours a day. Then, as we climbed the stairs to the prayer room on the second floor, he told me this month was a month of fasting and prayer. Each of PTL’s 611 employees is allowed to take a day to fast and pray (and still be paid.)

About ten people were kneeling in various parts of the Upper Room praying softly when we went in. Bakker read his Bible for a few minutes, then prayed quietly for a few more minutes. I prayed for a while, then began looking at the thousands of snapshots that had been made into a giant collage on movable partitions lining the walls.

Then Bakker moved to a table where thousands of prayer requests had been piled. He asked the others in the room to gather around and pray with him. “There’s no magic in this,” he explained. “This is just a point of contact for our faith.”

Outside the Upper Room, Bakker pointed to where he intends to build a replica of Golgotha and a wall to represent the wall

around Jerusalem. We passed a grave with a large marker that read: Aubrey Sara, 1917-1982.

“Brother Sara was the man who started me in the ministry,” Bakker said. “He believed in Tammy and me when we didn’t believe in ourselves. He drove us to our first revival and he arranged for us to be ordained in North Carolina. I had him on my staff in his later years, I told him I would take care of him until he died and that I’d bury him. I didn’t realize it would be so soon.”

We hurried to the auditorium, called the Barn, where Bakker’s church—the Heritage Village Church and Missionary Fellowship—meets for services each week and where the “Jim Bakker” program is telecast until larger studios are constructed. We went immediately to his dressing rooms which were more elaborate than I had imagined, decorated with shades of green with the most modern furnishings and appointments. Bakker invited me into a smaller dressing room where he sat in a barber’s chair while a cosmetologist applied makeup for the show. Lyn Robbins, the production supervisor, and Dale Hill, vice-president of broadcasting, went over the last-minute show details. Bakker was handed a schedule for the day’s program.

With only a few minutes to show time, I took my place in the studio audience. There were about 100 people in the audience that day—mostly older people with bright eager smiles. The set was casual—a comfortable living room setting with bright colors and lots of artificial flowers and potted trees.

Then, at 11 a.m., the timpani rolled, the theme song swelled, and the host introduced “JIMMMM AND TAM-MMMY BAKKKKER!” Jim and Tammy trotted on stage, and as the applause died down and the music faded they promised their partners, as they do each day that “You can make it.”

The guest that day was Mike Murdock and the topic was pain. Murdock told about losing everything at one point in his life,

only to have God restore him. The Bakkers said some of the hard things they have been through resulted in good. For example, Bakker said the marriage enrichment courses offered at the Total Living Center that are helping marriages be restored are the result of the "problems Tammy and I had."

There was a worshipful song by the PTL singers, and Bakker asked people to accept Jesus as their personal Savior as the organ played softly in the background. I sensed the Spirit "tug" on my heart, much as I had in hundreds of Pentecostal altar calls.

Then, with only a few minutes of the 60-minute show to go, the announcer began talking about how people could write in for the "Expressions of PTL" calendar and a new book by Bakker entitled *You Can Make It*. Bakker asked the people to help the ministry of PTL expand, but there was none of the hardsell appeal I'd come to expect from PTL. The program was suddenly over. I felt uplifted.

It would be impossible to discuss PTL or Jim Bakker at any length without talking about the impact Tammy Faye has had on the ministry. For 21 years she has been his wife, the mother of their two children, his helpmeet and partner in the ministry. She has supported him through good times and bad and has stood loyally behind him through the agony of the FCC investigation.

At the height of that controversy she wrote a love-letter which was published in *The Charlotte Observer*. It read: "I love you, honey. I've seen the awful hurt in your eyes as you have read this paper and seen your good name run down by people who do not even know you. People that don't know and don't care about the sacrifices you have made and the tears I have seen you shed as you have tried to do your part to make this world a better place to live in.

"So many times I've wanted to scream, 'Honey, it just isn't

worth it.' Then I remember what this God you preach about has done in my own life and the joy He has brought me, and suddenly it makes it all worthwhile again."

Over the years Tammy has always worked with Jim. Their marriage has been a true partnership. During their years on the evangelistic circuit she sang and ministered alongside him. For seven years she co-hosted the "Jim and Tammy Show." on CBN, often working long hours. She has made several record albums for both children and adults, and has written two bestselling books, *I Gotta Be Me* and *Run to the Roar*. She frequently hosts the "PTL Club" and sings on the show often. She has invested her own blood, sweat, tears, and prayers into fulfilling their dream.

As one of eight children growing up in northern Minnesota, Tammy learned firsthand what poverty was like. Her family still did not have indoor plumbing when she and Jim made their first visit home as a married couple. She also experienced the sting of religious bigotry early. Her father deserted the family when she was small. Her mother later divorced him and remarried. Despite the fact that the divorce was not her fault. Tammy's mother was never allowed to join the small Pentecostal church which the family attended.

When Tammy was a teenager she felt the call of God in her life and decided to enroll at North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. It was there that she met Bakker. He proposed on the third date, and they were married in the prayer room of the Minneapolis Evangelistic Auditorium in 1962.

Jim and Tammy are a study in contrasts. Where he is dark, she is fair. He is conservative, she is flamboyant. He is introverted and suffers from ulcers. She is extroverted and lets her emotions run freely and easily. Jim rarely displays anger, while Tammy explodes, but forgives quickly. He is calm and premeditated in his actions. She is spontaneous and in her own words, "nutty." Bakker is laid-back and Tammy is volatile.

Her irrepressible and unpredictable nature have served as a lightning rod for criticism. "Tammy might bounce around with false eyelashes and a wig today and be natural tomorrow," says Cliff Dudley, coauthor of her autobiography "Some people can't stand that."

Her outlandish makeup and manner also invite parody. A comedienne on "SCTV" does a Tammy Faye imitation in which she advertises "industrial strength mascara" as it runs down her cheeks between sobs.

Tammy says her love of beautiful things, which has also caused controversy, is a result of a childhood spent dressed in serviceable black because the household budget had no room for frills. She acknowledges that she is an incurable window-shopper, but says that she buys many of her clothes at a cut-rate boutique where they snip the labels out of designer clothes and sell them for half price.

She loves to relate the story of a shopping spree in K Mart when she was pushing a basket filled with dresses down an aisle only to be confronted by a TV viewer who stared at her in amazement and then blurted out, "I see it, but I don't believe it, but I like it."

Tammy was devastated by the problems which swamped the ministry during the past three years, and they almost destroyed their marriage. As she tells it: "I knew Jim still loved me, but he was never there. He would always be in a meeting, and he would sit for hours and hours with his top people, but he never had an hour for me. I began to think that he cared more about them than he did for me and the kids. I finally got to the place where I just didn't feel needed anymore. I felt less a part of PTL than the PTL singers."

In early 1981 while PTL was shooting on location in Hawaii, she told Bakker the marriage was over and left. As rumors ran amok, she went to California—presumably to get some

perspective on her problems—where she got an apartment next to Palmdale Hospital in Palmdale. There she counseled with Christian psychologists and sought God's help. Today she says her marriage is better than ever. Bakker spends more time at home and she has learned to communicate better. They also have tried to cut back on separate travel, since they found that it was pulling them apart.

In spite of her high public profile, Tammy Faye still views her role as primarily a supportive one. "Backing Jim is what I've always felt was my role," she says. "I do the program if he needs a rest or when he needs to do business. I feel I'm there to hold up his hand and help him—to take some of the burden from him. I'm a much lighter person than Jim is. I giggle and laugh a lot. I tend to be more optimistic.

Later that day I had dinner with the Bakkers, their two children and some friends. On our way to dinner we stopped by the hospital. Uncle Henry Harrison, Bakker's co-host's elderly father, was seriously ill and the Bakkers visited him while I stayed with the children. It showed me a side of Bakker which I hadn't seen before—that of the pastor.

After dinner, I boarded a plane and headed home. My flight home was an opportunity to think about the day's activities and to reflect on what I'd seen. Much of what I had seen was to be expected. PTL put its best foot forward for me. I saw its facilities and got to ask questions about its operation. But I came away with something more—a new understanding and new appreciation of PTL and of Jim Bakker. In a single day I had caught something of Bakker's spirit. I had seen his dream. I had heard him talk about the struggle and pain he has gone through as he has seen that dream come into being. I also began to sense that in spite of Bakker's weaknesses he is a strong man. Lesser men would have been crushed by what he has had to endure.

Perhaps the most revealing comment of the day was about after

having built the building and having to go back and put in a foundation at PTL. That summed up better than anything else what has been happening at PTL. Here is an example of a ministry that did not put down a firm foundation. Jesus warned against this. When the winds and the waves came and beat on PTL, many things collapsed. But it didn't all collapse. That is because, I believe, that PTL is of God. Because God has His hand on it. He has allowed the wind and waves, and the rebuilding process to happen.

I believe that PTL has learned some lessons—some hard lessons. But now that they have learned, their future ministry looks bright. There is no telling what God can do with that ministry in the years ahead.

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## **Christians To Rock, Ride And Rejoice At Rock the Universe**

Thousands of believers are expected to rock, ride and rejoice at Universal Orlando's Rock the Universe 2016, one of the biggest Christian music festivals in the country.

Set for Sept. 9 and 10, this year's concert line-up features some of Christian music's most popular artists, including Christian hip-hop icon TobyMac, Billboard Music Award-winning rock band Skillet and GRAMMY award-winning hip-hop artist Lecrae.

TobyMac, who will be performing at Rock the Universe for the seventh time, said his appearance will include songs from each of his solo releases, but it will focus on his latest album, *This Is Not a Test* (Forefront Records). His next project will be a live-performance CD and DVD, available in

November.

TobyMac told the *Orlando Sentinel* that he loves performing in theme parks, which includes six parks this summer. After this weekend at Universal, he'll travel in the next two weeks for shows at Carowinds in North Carolina and Cedar Point in Ohio.

"Theme parks are the perfect atmosphere for my music. My music is festive," TobyMac, 51, told the *Sentinel*. "It's like a big party, and it meets the crowd where they are and it takes them, I think, where they want to go when they're standing in front of me in a theme park. It works for me."

Other Rock the Universe artists include Jeremy Camp, Matt Maher, Lauren Daigle, Finding Favour and Colton Dixon.

During the event, guests can also stop by the Coca-Cola FanZone, featuring more live music and autograph sessions with performers. Guests will also have the opportunity to experience the Saturday night candle-lighting ceremony on Sept. 10 and Universal Studios Florida's attractions, including Hollywood Rip Ride Rockit and Transformers.

Held since 1998, Rock the Universe is one of two major Christian rock festivals held in Orlando each year. The other festival is Night of Joy, which is held at Disney's ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex this year, on the same nights as Rock the Universe. The two festivals are both successful, despite the matching dates. Many bands tend to switch between the two festivals.

Tickets for Rock the Universe 2016 are \$65.99 (one night), \$103.99 (two nights), \$99.99 (Saturday night and one theme park), \$164.99 (both nights). For more information, visit [RocktheUniverse.com](http://RocktheUniverse.com). {eoa}

**Eric Tiansay** is a freelance writer for *Charismamag.com*.

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# The Band-Aid That Covers Gaping Wounds in Many Men's Hearts

These two little words are like conversational Teflon. Nothing sticks. The tough questions are deflected, enabling you to continue down the same path without being bothered.

You can hide a lot of unpleasant stuff behind “I’m fine,” the fears and frustrations in your career, the dysfunctions in your marriage and family, a crisis of faith, even your addictions—at least for a while. It’s like using a band-aid to cover a gaping wound.

Why are we so reluctant to reveal what’s really going on in our life? It’s as if we think we are all alone in our struggles and no one would understand, but that’s not true. To one degree or another, we all struggle with the same things. [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) says, *“No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, and He will not permit you to be tempted above what you can endure, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

We have a common enemy and common struggles. That’s what the Scriptures say. In [Tender Warrior](#), Stu Weber writes: *“So everything that’s killing you is somewhere in the chest of every man you know.”* Realizing we are not alone can be the beginning of more substantive conversations and more meaningful relationships.

Here are three things that can help:

1. **Substantive conversations** don't typically take place in a foyer or a hallway. We need to carve out time and space that allow enough margin to keep our minds from drifting to our next meeting.

2. We need to **unplug from technology** so we are not distracted by the fondling of our mobile devices. Keep it in your pocket or in your briefcase, not on the table.

3. We need to listen, **really listen**, with care and compassion. Agendas are helpful in a business meeting, but a mechanical checklist can be harmful in a relational context, especially if the conversation feels more like an interrogation. Most guys will shut down.

Deflecting with "I'm fine" is understandable.

These things require time and practice, but it's absolutely worth the effort and the investment. In my experience, the best conversations happen within the context of trustworthy friendships that have been cultivated with care and camaraderie.

Don't settle for the usual. Don't default to "I'm fine!" {eoa}

**Tierce and Dana Green** were married in 1987 and have one daughter. Tierce spoke widely as a speaker and consultant for 25 years and wrote curriculum for organizations like LifeWay and Student Life. He taught the principles of Authentic Manhood over a seven-year period in a seasonal gathering called The Quest to over a thousand men each week. He has recently become pastor of House Churches at Church Project in The Woodlands, Texas.

*For the original article, visit [authenticmanhood.com](http://authenticmanhood.com).*

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# The Supernatural Danger of Binge Eating

I received an email from a lady from the Take Back Your Temple website just the other day who said that when she binge eats, her mind just goes blank. Have you ever had that experience? I have.

But I just made an interesting connection among mindless eating, the blankness she described and Eastern meditation. It chilled me.

When you meditate the Eastern way, they tell you to empty your mind. The reason, they say, is that it relaxes your body and calms your mind. Now that I look back on it, my binge eating was a form of meditation, but it was the Eastern kind not the biblical kind.

My mind was blank while my hands seems to operate all on their own, picking up the fork, spoon, knife, box and bag, seemingly without me being involved.

I realize what I am about to ask is controversial and you'll likely be uncomfortable in considering it: Could emptying your mind in this way open you up to demonic influence? I think it can.

In the story of the Unclean Spirit that Jesus told (Matt. 12:43-45), He talked about an unclean spirit being cast out of a man, but deciding to return. When the unclean spirit returned, he found the house empty, swept and put in order. Not only did the spirit come back, but he brought seven other wicked spirits with him!

While I do not believe a disciple of Jesus Christ can be demonically possessed because the Holy Spirit seals us for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30), I do believe that we can be

susceptible to the enemy's influence through our flesh and an un-renewed mind. I believe there is a spirit of gluttony who "feeds" off the pleasure of food indulgence and grows stronger as we engage in that behavior.

In every instance of biblical meditation, we are told to meditate on or in something. We are never told to be "blank minded" or "mindless (without mind)."

On the contrary, we are told that we have the mind of Christ, and I know Jesus was not empty headed!

So if bingeing remains a problem for you, then I ask you to focus on filling your mind during those moments of temptation. Renounce the spirit of gluttony in the name of Jesus. Resist the urge to empty out your mind or go blank. Stay in the present and focus on what you are doing. Meditate on godly things and fill yourself with the breath He has given you. In that way, your house is not empty.

Here is an exhortation from the apostle Paul to Timothy, and I think it is good advice for us all:

*"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Until I come, give attention to reading, exhortation, and doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the elders. Meditate on these things. Give yourself completely to them, that your progress may be known to everyone" (1 Tim. 4:12-15). {eoa}*

**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 [takebackyourtemple.com](http://takebackyourtemple.com). Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.

For the original article, visit [takebackyourtemple.com](http://takebackyourtemple.com).

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# Without This Element, Your Prayers Will Lack True Power

I love the wonderful Holy Spirit, and I hope that you do, too. Ever since I was powerfully baptized with the Holy Spirit on Nov. 17, 1998—after a month and a half of getting clean from drugs—I have grown closer to Him.

I learned quickly that the Spirit of God is a Person and I can fellowship with Him and dialogue with Him about everything. Since the day He filled me with power, I have been on an adventure to testify about Jesus to others and see them filled with His wonderful Spirit.

John 14:26 says, *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”* Jesus was instructing His disciples that the Holy Spirit would bring to their mind the things He said, so that they would tell others and spread the gospel message around the world.

A few of them recorded His words, such as Matthew, and wrote epistles, such as Peter. With John 14:26 in mind, we can know that the Holy Spirit loves to teach us the message of Christ and remind you of the things you have read and have been taught throughout the course of your day.

The Holy Spirit loves to remind us of Jesus! It is an exciting adventure to be part of.

Hebrews 4:12 is often quoted as a reference for Scripture but in context we should look at the previous and following verses. Upon closer inspection, we see it is actually a reference to a Person.

Hebrews 4:12-13 says, "For the word of God is alive, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. 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."

What the writer to the Hebrews was saying is that the *Logos*, which is the Word of God, which is the same truth the apostle John referenced in John 1:1-4, is Jesus. He is alive and active today, His Holy Spirit empowering us and we can approach His throne of grace with confidence knowing we will receive mercy and help from Him (Hebrews 4:16) and He reminds us of the words of Jesus which are life (John 6:63).

The Holy Spirit continues the ministry of Jesus, who is the Word of God, through us. He helps us pray and makes intercession for us. Romans 8:26-27 says, "*Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*"

His prayers are perfect for each one of us because He knows the will of God. The next time you go to prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to pray through you, knowing that He prays the will of God.

The Holy Spirit wants to show us more. In discussing wisdom and the power of God, Paul the apostle said in 1 Corinthians 2:10, "But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."

This is not talking about secrets outside of Scripture, but it is saying that the Spirit wants to and does reveal the wisdom and power of God to us, and this adventure takes us deeper

into the Scripture and He delights in showing us what He has prepared for each one of us and He gives them to us freely (1 Cor. 2:6-16).

If you don't have a revelation of the Holy Spirit in the ways described, then right now, where you are, begin to worship God and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and saturate you. Ask Him to reveal Jesus to you more each day. Ask Him to pray through you and show you what He has planned for your life.

If you can, go to a place to be alone with Him and talk to the Holy Spirit, with a pen and journal in hand and a Bible and enter in to the best, most amazing and wonderful relationship you can ever have. You will see how wonderful He truly is.  
{eoa}

**Jared Laskey**, is starting *Destiny Open Bible Church* in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and is a Master of Divinity student at Regent University with an MACM from Shepherds Theological Seminary in Cary, North Carolina, and a Bachelor of Science in Pastoral Studies from Eugene Bible College. He lives to see Jesus awaken this generation to the power of His Holy Spirit. You can follow him on twitter @jaredalasky, or contact him through his website, [firebornministries.com](http://firebornministries.com). He also co-authored 'Veronica's Hero' found [here](#).

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## How a Christian Marriage Can Survive Infidelity

While there are several scenes that make the movie *Love Actually* inappropriate, it does give some intriguing story lines.

A painful one is the story of a married couple named Harry and Karen played by Alan Rickman and Emma Thompson. Karen figures out Harry has cheated on her and confronts him with an interesting question. She asks, "What would you do if you were in my position? Would you stay, knowing that your life would always be a little bit worse, or would you cut and run?"

That question is one any couple going through the pain of infidelity is forced to confront. It's also easy to default to hopelessness about the relationship because the pain of betrayal cuts so deep. Many couples make immediate decisions based on the emotion of the moment, which can end the relationship or damage it even more. The emotions are valid, but while the short term appears bleak, what about the long term? Can a marriage survive an affair? Is getting over infidelity even possible? If so, how? Here are the answers to those questions.

## **Rebuilding a Great Marriage**

Life won't necessarily always be worse after an affair has occurred. In fact, it could possibly be better. When I say better I'm not saying that life will be easier, and I'm certainly not suggesting that having an affair is good for a marriage. However, it could be used to flush out [the behaviors and attitudes that created an environment where an affair was desirable](#).

Most affairs occur because of a lack of communication. Couples will stop listening to one another or never listened in the first place. Nothing makes a person isolated like when they consistently feel unheard. There is an opportunity to air out all of the dysfunction and start over. The process of recovering from an affair can be like rebuilding a house that has been destroyed by an earthquake. You can redesign and rebuild it the way you want by getting rid of all of the unhealthy habits. The problem is the foundation is now cracked.

## **Repairing a Cracked Foundation**

Great marriages are built on love and trust. When those are violated, it creates a powerful break. Frankly, sometimes it creates a break that never fully heals. But even then that doesn't mean all is lost. When there is [complete remorse from the offending party](#) and [an offering of forgiveness and grace from the offended party](#), the process of healing begins. From that point, trust can be re-established.

In order for that to happen each person, particularly the one who cheated, has to live truthfully, honestly, and transparently day in and day out. The offender needs to be willing to discuss the affair in detail, not withholding any information the offended seeks.

Both spouses should also turn to the Lord in prayer and seek Him and His Word diligently every day. God wants to help repair the marriage, if only you will ask. Remember, God hates divorce.

Everything must be put on the table. The goal should be to build a resumé of reasons to be trusted again. The offended should be allowed to discuss the affair whenever and for how long they need. This may be for years. Forgiveness may need to work over time. However, forgiveness means the offended will no longer punish the offender for the affair or hold it against them.

## **Choosing Hope**

Both husband and wife need to commit to achieving the best possible outcome as a couple. A decision has to be made to hope for what the marriage could be with hard work instead of despair and divorce. Each person needs to fight for their spouse and the marriage. Optimism for the future has to be the focus and it must be protected. The couple must have faith that a great marriage is achievable. Disbelief and hopelessness are unwelcome.

## Finding Objective Help

All marriages need wisdom, insight and encouragement, but particularly marriages in crisis. First, the marriage most likely got to where it is because of dysfunction below the surface. An objective, outside point of view is helpful to identify the trouble spots and challenge the couple to change. This can come in the form of professional counseling and/or mentors. They also need to surround themselves with people who will support them to reach the marriage they hope to reach—people who will help them remember that a thriving relationship is possible. {eoa}

**BJ Foster** is the director of content creation for All Pro Dad and a married father of two.

For the original article, visit [allprodad.com](http://allprodad.com).

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# This Destructive Lifestyle Can Tarnish Your Witness for Christ

I have had a major shift in my overall motivation for working out and staying in shape in the last handful of years. It's so that I can stay healthy, which helps me better do the work that God calls me to do.

I know that I am more alert, have more energy and can stay better focused when I work out on a regular basis. Keeping fit also contributes to reducing my chances of the many lifestyle-related diseases that could set in and hamper my efforts to do things for God.

Paul reminds us in [Ephesians 2:10](#) that “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them.” Certainly, it is a miracle in itself that God designed the human body so that it could run 39,000 miles and more over a lifetime. He has put our bodies together in unimaginable ways. My heart has beaten at least 1.8 trillion times over the last 58 years. Imagine that! Another miracle.

In [1 Timothy 4:7-8](#), we are reminded by Paul to “exercise in the ways of godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable in all things, holding promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

Clearly there is much benefit to being physically fit, but it is even more important to be spiritually fit. Spiritual exercises like reading the Bible, praying, surrendering to God, serving others and forgiving others are all important aspects of one’s spiritual fitness program.

The writer of Hebrews encourages us to run the race God has set before us, and we are to do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish ([Heb. 12:1-2](#)). In the middle of the 12th chapter, we are encouraged to mark out a straight path for our feet so those who follow us will not stumble and fail but will become strong.

I’m thankful to God that I’m still able to enjoy my short runs and that, while I am on them, He gives me the inspiration and creativity from which I can share spiritual truths with my readers.

I’m also thankful that He has given me the “work” to encourage others of the faith to “remain on a straight path.” I pray that He is also using me to share the gospel with those who do not know Him.

In the “race” of your life, don’t give up. Stay the course. If you are a believer, others are watching you and many need to

experience the love of Jesus that flows through you. [Go deeper in your faith.](#)

If you don't know God in a personal way and are looking for spiritual strength to help you cope with the stressors of life, consider [accepting Jesus into your heart](#) and receive His strength, peace and joy.

### Questions to Ask Yourself

- What "work" has God called you to do? Is your health an obstacle for doing this "work"?
- How spiritually fit are you? Are you engaged in meaningful spiritual exercises throughout each week?
- Do you have real peace, joy and hope because you experience Jesus' love? {eoa}

**Dale Fletcher** is the executive director of Faith and Health Connection. For the original article, visit [fitandhealthconnection.org](http://fitandhealthconnection.org).

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## Dangerous Places Your Teen May Search for a Sense of Identity

I played a lot of sports when I was young, but I was best at soccer. It was something I excelled at from an early age. As the years went by the more soccer, and specifically the recognition I received from it, became my identity.

By the time I was halfway through high school it had become ingrained. During a preseason game my junior year I broke my foot straight across and was told I would miss the entire

season. For most of that year, I felt lost. The focus of my identity was gone. I didn't know who I was anymore and felt like my value had fallen. As a result, I was often tired and depressed. My grades dropped drastically. It took me a long time to recover from finding my identity in the wrong thing.

The teenage years are filled with uncertainty because the core identity hasn't developed yet. Teens are desperate to find one to give them a sense of stability, self-worth and significance. Sometimes they will grab anything in front of them. Many will place their identity in things that don't last, as I did. It's like building a large house on a pile of sand.

It's dangerous because the foundation is shaky and will cause the structure to eventually come down. We need to make sure our kids are finding their identity and value in something solid and reinforce it while steering them away from the wrong ones.

Here are seven dangerous places teens go to find a sense of identity:

**1. Friends and popularity.** There's nothing wrong with being popular, but too often it dictates how teens feel about themselves. They quantify their existence in the amount of people following them on Snapchat, the number of 'likes' they receive, and what parties they are invited to attend. In the end, they create a person they think the masses will like rather than being their authentic selves. The shell gets painted, but in the interior is empty.

**2. Boyfriend/Girlfriend.** If they don't have one they feel like less of a person or left behind. [When they do have a boyfriend or girlfriend they lose themselves in the relationship.](#) It becomes their sole focus and they tend to immerse themselves in the other person's interests and desires. When the relationship ends, they are left with nothing.

**3. Looks.** In the long term, and sometimes short term, looks change and fade. In the meantime, they will compare themselves with others, obsess over every imperfection and live off of the compliments of others. [This is particularly rampant among teen girls.](#)

**4. Success.** When people define their existence on their success, they will be as good as their last accomplishment. Even when they succeed, there's a shelf life before they will have to go find their next achievement to prove their self-worth. It's an endless cycle of pressure to perform over and over gain. When they fail, they'll identify themselves as failures.

**5. Abilities.** They will measure their abilities to others and always feel as though their own abilities fall short. There is always someone who is more talented or has a wider range of gifts. There's also no guarantee abilities will last. Age or injury eventually wear down abilities.

**6. Having money and stuff.** They will feel good about themselves when they have it or have purchased something new. However, this can easily make a person arrogant, self-seeking and superficial. Then when the money runs out they will feel as empty as their bank account.

**7. Being wild.** Teens look to receive attention and they will get it however they can. If they aren't receiving the good attention, they will seek out bad attention. In their minds, no attention equates to insignificance. So many will try to gain it by being wild—seeking extreme ways to party and be rebellious.

**Where are your kids finding their identity?** In our house, our kids are taught that their identity is that they are loved. They were created by a God who loves them and their eternal value that has nothing to do with any of the above. It's a core identity that is solid and lasting. Whether they choose

to live in that identity is up to them. {eoa}

**BJ Foster** is the director of Content Creation for All Pro Dad and a married father of two.

For the original article, visit [allprodad.com](http://allprodad.com).

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## Crushing the Vicious Source of Sluggishness and Disease

Years ago, a friend borrowed my small Ford Ranger pickup truck. When he brought it back, the bed was sagging.

“I went to a marble show at the convention center, and they gave me lots of free samples,” he said. “But the weight was too much for my pickup. It messed up the shocks and cost me some money to replace them.”

Millions of people do to their bodies what my friend did to my truck. They load up their bodies with extra weight, more than their frames were designed to carry. Then they wonder why their knees and hips are wearing out and they’re developing arthritis, ankle problems, heel spurs, lower back pain, bunions, degenerated disks and more. That’s their body’s way of saying, “Quit putting so much weight on me!”

Why can’t Americans lose weight and keep it off? There are some basic reasons.

Bad foods are a habit. Bad foods are convenient. Bad foods are a vicious cycle. Hormones make bad foods look good. Bad foods give comfort.

Starchy and sugary foods raise serotonin, one of the brain’s

feel-good chemicals. Chocolate raises dopamine levels, another feel-good chemical. Generally, when people are depressed, anxious or just low in serotonin or dopamine, they reach for a food that pumps up these feel-good chemicals.

## **Food Cravings**

The main reason many Americans are obese is simply gluttony, and Christians are no exception. Christians often think that because they don't smoke, drink or party, they can eat all they want! Then they reap what they sow in obesity, heart disease, cancer, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, reflux disease, sleep apnea and loss of quality of life.

Webster's dictionary defines *gluttony* as "excess in eating and drinking." The Bible equates it with drunkenness: "Do not be among winebibbers, among riotous eaters of meat; for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags" (Prov. 23:20-21).

The word "glutton" in this passage is defined as "ravenous eater of meat." This describes a lot of men in particular. If you want to experience the harsh reality of some people's lack of restraint, simply go to a buffet and watch how they load up their plates. Many will eat as if they've never seen food before. Food is not at the root of the overeating issue; it actually goes much deeper than that.

## **The Mind-Body-Spirit Connection**

Many times people who struggle with a weight problem experience self-loathing, loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, guilt and shame—especially the latter two. I have treated numerous patients with weight problems, and almost always the root cause is emotional. The moment they mess up, they feel guilty and ashamed, and they feel like quitting. In my medical office, we treat the patient's body, mind (emotions) and spirit.

We give them Scriptures to confess daily aloud and meditate upon so that they begin to change their mindset. The Word gives them hope.

I take them through forgiveness therapy, which enables them to forgive themselves and others. This breaks the vicious cycle of negative feelings and emotions. Then we address the physical by making lifestyle changes—eating living foods and exercising.

Our bodies are precious and were created as a dwelling place for their Creator. Start practicing temperance, moderation, portion control and self-restraint when it comes to food. Then, when you make positive changes to your diet, it will have a real and lasting effect on your health. {eoa}

**Don Colbert, M.D.**, is board certified in family practice and in anti-aging medicine. He also has received extensive training in nutritional and preventive medicine, and he has helped millions of people discover the joy of living in divine health.