

The Bottleneck Holding Many Christian Men Back From Discipleship

Twenty years ago there wasn't enough good curriculum to disciple men. Leaders who attended the annual meetings of NCMM (the National Coalition of Ministries to Men) recognized that as the bottleneck most holding us back, and began encouraging curriculum developers.

Today I'm happy to say there is a plethora of good curriculum to disciple men. It has led to an acceleration in men's discipleship. So what's the bottleneck today that, if removed, would *most* lead to an acceleration in men's discipleship over the *next* 20 years? But first, a little background.

A Little Background: The Bottleneck Theory

In the "the bottleneck theory" (officially, the Theory of Constraints), you may have 10 obstacles slowing you down, but at any given moment there is only "one" obstacle that is most slowing you down.

So even if you solve all nine of the other issues, you still won't see any acceleration until you remove that "one thing" most holding you back.

Let me give an example. Once I was going through a breakfast buffet at an old-fashioned Holiday Inn. Everything was great until I got about half way through, and then the line came to an abrupt halt.

Why? Someone had put the toaster in the middle of the buffet line! And it had become the bottleneck that brought everything to a standstill.

A good manager would spot the problem and move the toaster to

the end of line. Then people could step aside to wait once they popped in their bread. And the line would speed up. But you know what happens next, right?

Yep. The “next biggest” bottleneck will appear (the new obstacle *most* slowing you down)—let’s say waffles. And once that bottleneck is removed, the next one will show up—maybe eggs.

But if you fix the waffles before the toaster problem—no acceleration. Why? It’s because people are still backing up at the toaster.

That’s why the only way to accelerate is to first solve that one bottleneck most holding you back. So how does this apply to men’s discipleship?

The Bottleneck Today

In my opinion the current bottleneck—the one thing *most* holding the church back from mission success—is “disciples not making disciples, starting at home.”

Of course, “disciples not making disciples” is an oxymoron—an internally inconsistent statement.

What’s the underlying problem? We’re doing a much better job of inspiring men to grow, but at the same time we’re not giving them a compelling vision to reinvest in other men. Men who have been discipled are not discipling other men.

What’s really going on? Paralleling culture, in our day there’s a lot of “spiritual obesity.” There are so many spiritual overeaters who have been gorging on good teaching for years, but haven’t been following the Jesus way of discipling others as they have been discipled.

Why does it matter? Most of us don’t need more food; we need more exercise.

Personally, I think “disciples not making disciples” is *ignorance*, not *malice*, which is why we urgently need to train men how to make disciples.

How Does God Provide to Solve This Problem?

God, of course, can do anything He wants. He can send a wholesale spiritual awakening even if *none of us* makes a single disciple. God can reform our governments, churches and families even if *none of us* makes a single disciple.

But apart from begging God for such a miracle, “making disciples who make disciples—starting at home” is what He commissioned as His designated way to turn things around.

So what’s the solution? How can we help people *really* believe that they can make a difference? That their personal involvement is not only desirable but necessary, even crucial? And what is the structure that will help them make that difference?

The really great news is that while implementation takes a few years, the solution is quite simple. There is a method for disciples to make disciples with proven results. It’s the method Jesus inaugurated as the cornerstone of His strategy to bring the gospel of His kingdom to the whole world:

He Started a Small Group

If Jesus was incarnate today, He would take a few men under His wing, show them the ropes, help them become robust disciples, then send them out to disciple others with instructions to, in turn, disciple others—starting at home.

That’s His plan, then and now: “Disciples making disciples.” Why? Because He wants to save the world.

Jesus wagered the success of His entire mission on the success of a single small group to spiritually reproduce themselves.

What makes a small group so special? A small group is where

people can get so personally invested in others that they come to believe that what they say and do really can make a difference, and that their personal involvement really does matter.

What makes a small group work? There are several factors, of course, such as a leader who cares, two more people who really want to grow, and a respect for the process of relationships.

But like a shade tree over all of these is love. Love makes me care. I may love the masses in a general way, but when I really love the most is when I go small.

Why Does It Matter?

Disciples making disciples—it's something anyone can do. And it's something you can know for sure will actually make a difference in the history of the world. Why?

Because "disciples making disciples" is God's designated way to release the power of His gospel on every problem we face.

Because however we got ourselves into the current situation, the only solution is to disciple our way out.

Because evangelism without the rest of discipleship is cruel.

Because discipleship changes marriages, families, the workplace and our communities.

Because discipleship is the one idea that, once fully understood and truly believed, changes *everything*.

Are you making disciples who make disciples? If yes, praise God for you! But if you're not sure how, and tired of sitting by while Rome burns, send me an email to patrickmorley@maninthemirror.org and we'll get you what you need.

Remember, you're not really making disciples until your disciples are making disciples. {eoa}

Patrick Morley is the founder of Man in the Mirror ministries. For the original article, visit maninthemirror.org.

What Submission Really Means for Your Household

Biblical submission is a highly controversial topic in today's society, and I believe the definition has been twisted and molded into something it was never meant to become.

I believe submission within a marriage goes hand in hand. And while many people like to spin Scripture in order to hold an iron first over their wife, I believe God's intention for marriage was something quite different. It was never meant to be about control. It was never meant to be about ownership.

Our Household

When it comes to the Wilson household, my wife and I have come to the agreement that we will discuss big decisions as a couple—all in hopes that we are truly seeking what is best for our family in the eyes of God. Your household might be run a little bit differently, and that's OK. The point is to come to a decision that you can both get behind as a married couple.

My wife has entrusted me with leading our family, but that doesn't mean I am the almighty dictator. In fact, it's quite opposite. I never make decisions without her. I value my wife's opinion and voice just as much as I do my own. It's an honor to lead our home together, and the reality is I couldn't do it without the support and wisdom of my wife.

She's a champ. We do it together and that's how it should be.

What Does the Bible Say?

“Wives, be submissive to your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head and Savior of the church, which is His body. But as the church submits to Christ, so also let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and that He might present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. In this way men ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord cares for the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I am speaking about Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:22-32, MEV).

After reading through those passages of the Bible, it's clear what God's intention for marriage is. But while the intentions seem clear to me, I believe many others have interpreted these words for their own benefit. Let me explain ...

Here are three things *“Wives Must Submit to Their Husbands”* doesn't mean:

1. A husband gets to bully his wife around. Biblical submission and bullying don't mix. Let's not forget that [Ephesians 5:25](#) states that a man must love his wife as Christ loved the church. Christ never bullied his people but instead loved cared and nurtured them on a daily basis. Let's also not forget that [Ephesians 5:28](#) states that husbands must love their wives as their own bodies. When putting both of

these verses into personal application, a husband is not to bully nor control his wife, but instead love and nourish her the way Jesus loves his own people.

“My wife has entrusted me with leading our family, but that doesn’t mean I am the almighty dictator.”

2. A wife must submit to whatever her husband says. A man isn’t his wife’s boss, nor is he her slave master. Being a man doesn’t give one any special treatment in the eyes of God, nor does it give someone the freedom to make one’s wife do whatever he pleases. This isn’t a dictatorship. Mutual respect and honor must be present in any marriage that is yearning to last the test of time.

3. A wife has no say in decision making. As much as some men would like it to be, this isn’t true either. Marriage is a joint effort. And although some households might decide on giving the man the final say in big decisions, one must understand that a woman’s voice is just as important if not more in certain circumstances.

The Bible states that a man and woman will become one flesh in the eyes of God, which means both parties must work together for the betterment of their marriage, family and life.

Jarrid Wilson is a husband, pastor and author relentlessly sharing the love of Jesus. For more from Jarrid, visit jarridwilson.com.

What God Requires of You

Before You Master Self-Control

Have you ever wondered why it is hard to exercise self-control? An incident happened to me yesterday that illustrated the one thing required for self-control vividly.

I was driving home from a visit to my mother. As I drove along the main highway, my cell phone buzzed. It was a text from my husband Mike. Mike had read on our Nextdoor.com [neighborhood website](#) that a traffic light was out at a busy intersection that I had to go through on the way home.

He was warning me to avoid the area.

I was approaching the last road I could take to avoid it. I had a choice:

1. Do I heed Mike's warning and use my knowledge about the back roads to take a better route to get home, or ...
2. Do I continue along the same road and take my chances that the traffic wouldn't be that bad?

I picked choice No. 1. I turned off on that "last chance" road and navigated the back roads until I got home.

On the way to Bible study later that evening, we decided to pass through that intersection since traffic was usually heavier on the opposite side at that time of day.

The traffic light was still out. We saw the people stuck in their cars on the westbound side, which was the way I had been traveling earlier.

I've never seen the traffic that bad.

I thank God and Mike for helping me to avoid the jam—and the

frustration that would have come with it!

This situation reminded me of how people often stumble with self-control and a scripture that tells you what must come first.

The Scripture is 2 Peter 1:5-9:

“For this reason make every effort to add virtue to your faith; and to your virtue, knowledge; and to your knowledge, self-control; and to your self-control, patient endurance; and to your patient endurance, godliness; and to your godliness, brotherly kindness; and to your brotherly kindness, love. For if these things reside in you and abound, they ensure that you will neither be useless nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the one who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted because he has forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.”

Do you see the word that precedes self-control?

That is right. The word is **knowledge**. With more knowledge comes more options. So to use self-control, it requires exercising the knowledge you have.

If you only knew one thing, then you'd just go in the direction you know. You don't have any other choice because you are ignorant of other options.

But increased knowledge gives you access to them. Unfortunately, many people decide that it is too hard to choose a better route. Why? Because at first, it doesn't feel as comfortable as the old one.

That is normal. Eventually your brain will learn to follow the new route just as well as the old one. What is required is faith that it will happen, plus persistence and time.

Great rewards await you when you take that better path. This is essential information if you need motivation in exercising

your self-control.

Let's take a quick look at the words that precede knowledge, beginning at faith to bring greater understanding on this issue.

Everyone in Christ Jesus already has faith, enough to get us saved. We had "[full assurance in the heart](#) (faith)" that God's Word is true in the area of salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 12:3).

However, the degree to which we have and exercise the other godly traits in our Christian walk in our lifetime is entirely up to us.

Peter exhorts us to be diligent in building up godly character, which is accomplished through submitting to the Holy Spirit's daily leading. Diligence means paying "consistent and careful" attention to a matter.

Next is virtue. Virtue is a heart decision. Deciding to live virtuously means weighing God's excellencies against the pleasures of this present world—and valuing the former more than the latter.

You are willing to invest now in your Spiritual development because you value the future rewards. That is a moment-by-moment decision you must make with every choice you make.

Now, this is where knowledge comes in. Returning to my drive situation, I would have just continued on the road that I already know if Mike had not alerted me to the traffic situation.

However, he gave me new knowledge. So I had to decide what to do with that new knowledge.

Well, let's imagine that I had ignored that knowledge. I received his text but started thinking "I don't want to take the back roads. It takes longer, there are more twists and turns, and it takes me out of the way. I'll just keep driving

the way I know and take my chances.”

Now suppose I got stuck in the bad traffic after making that choice. I would only be in the same trouble as the person who was ignorant about the back roads, right?

Actually, I would be in worse shape! At least the ignorant person didn't have a choice. They were stuck in the traffic jam through no fault of their own.

But I had a choice because I knew better. If I had not heeded Mike's advice, then I would have been stuck in traffic—while replaying that moment when I could have avoided the trouble.

So not only would I have been stuck in traffic, but stuck in regret!

Think about this question:

What do you already know about losing weight and improving your health, but are not doing it?”

If you aren't already doing everything that you know and are able to do, then that actually puts you in a poorer position than someone who doesn't know at all!

So I am asking you to do three things with the information in this article:

1. Take inventory of what you already know to do about your health. Don't keep deceiving yourself that knowing better is enough to change (James 1:25). Take small steps in using the knowledge you already have and start today!”

2. Read and meditate upon the 2 Peter 1:5-9 Scripture to see what comes after self-control. Consider how a lack of self-control would impact someone's ability to demonstrate each of these character traits to their fullest extent.

3. Consider the reward that awaits you if you are diligent in

these things—not only now on Earth, but in the enrichment of your heavenly bank account. Yes, we all have one. See Jesus' words in Matthew 6:19-20.

I hope you will agree that the challenges involved in taking a better route in your choices (self-control) are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in you (Rom. 8:18)!"

Kimberly Taylor is the author of *The Weight Loss Scriptures and many other books*. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify to God's goodness and healing power. Visit takebackyourtemple.com and receive more free health and weight-loss tips.

For the original article, visit takebackyourtemple.com.

Prophecy: Don't Ignore the Angels of Transition

Before 2016 even began, the Lord told me [2016 would be a year of shifting seasons and suddenlies](#). That means transitions. Many are reporting shifting seasons, suddenlies and transitions—or feel one coming on. Others are frustrated because they bear witness to the prophetic word but feel stuck. Consider what the Lord told me:

"Many neglect the angels of transition, and they bypass the help I have sent to transition them into the next stage of their journey. Many ignore the angels of transition and, therefore, fail to enter into the new place I have set aside for them at the appointed time. Many are working in their own strength, struggling in the flesh and failing to embrace the

work of My angels on assignment to help them transition into the new thing. Look for the angels in times of transition.”

Only God can transition you from glory to glory, but there are angels to help you. Despite the acknowledged extreme teachings in the realm of angels, I was surprised at how much angelic activity we find in both the Old and New Testaments. Angels are mentioned 108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament—and the New Testament is much shorter!

I believe we’re neglecting this powerful resource. We certainly do not worship angels, but it’s absolutely foolish to ignore their ministry. Let me show you some ways angels can help in times of transition.

JOIN JENNIFER ON FACEBOOK FOR SPIRITUAL COMMENTARY AND ENCOURAGEMENT. [CLICK HERE.](#)

You Have an Angel

In Matthew 18:10, Jesus said: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.” We see angelic activity in the New Testament was common. When Peter was released from prison (by an angel) he came knocking on the door where intercessors were praying for his release—but they didn’t believe when he actually showed up. They said, “It is his angel” (Acts 12:15). The Bible says angels are ministering spirits to those who inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14).

We focus so much on demons, but remember only one-third of the angels fell. Two-thirds are still on our side. We need to understand the ministry of angels.

Angels can offer information in times of transition.

“Angels” really means messenger, so this is one of primary functions of an angel.

- Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25).
- Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38).
- God used angels to interpret visions He gave to Daniel, Zechariah and John in the book of Revelation.
- Angels shared with the shepherds the location of Christ's birthplace in the manger (Luke 2:8-20).
- An angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill the child Jesus (Matt. 2:13).
- An angel announced Christ's resurrection to the women who found His empty tomb (John 20).

WARNING: We should seek the Lord for information, not angels. But we should understand when we ask Him, He may send angels.

[CHECK OUT JENNIFER'S PROPHETIC TRAINING SCHOOL.](#)

Angels can offer direction in times of transition. An angel directed Abraham's servant in Genesis 24:1-7 to find a wife for his son. Abraham told him, "He shall send His angel before you and you shall take a wife for my son from there. The angel directed the servant straight to Rebekah."

An angel directed Philip in Acts 8:26: "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise up and go toward the south on the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'"

An angel directed Cornelius to call for Peter in Acts 1:3-5: "About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, 'Cornelius.' When he looked at him he was afraid, and said, 'What is it, Lord?' He said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and bring back Simon whose surname is Peter.'"

WARNING: We should not ask the Lord to send angels to direct us. We should ask Him to direct us. But He may choose to send angels to direct you. Be mindful that angels can direct you.

Angels can protect you in times of transition. An angel protected Daniel in the lion's den in Daniel 6:19-22. Daniel told the king, "My God has sent His angel and has shut the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me, because innocence was found in me before Him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

An angel protected Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3:26-29. The Bible says God "sent His angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him. They have defied the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God."

An angel spoke to Moses sternly about angelic protection in Exodus 23:20-22: "Indeed, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on guard before him and obey his voice. Do not provoke him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for My name is in him. But if you diligently obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries."

WARNING: God is our stronghold, our fortress and our protector. We should not seek angels to protect us. We should cry out to God to protect us and know that He may choose to send angels. Psalm 91 promises angelic protection to those who dwell in the shelter of the Most High.

Angels can bring provision in times of transition. An angel provided water for Hagar after Abraham expelled her in Genesis 21:15-19. An angel bought Elijah food after his battle with the false prophets and his run from Jezebel in 1 Kings 19:5-6: As he lay and slept under the juniper tree, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." He looked, and there was a cake baked on coals and a jar of water at his head. And he ate and drank and then lay down again.

WARNING: We should not pray that angels will bring us

provision. God is our provider. We pray to Jehovah Jireh, and if He needs to choose to send an angel to bring provision, we should be alert enough in the spirit to recognize this.

Angels can war on your behalf in times of transition. God sent an angel to fight for Israel in 2 Kings 19:35: "On that night the angel of the Lord went out and struck one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When others woke up early in the morning, these were all dead bodies." And God showed Elisha's servant the angel armies that stood with them in 2 Kings 6:15-7.

WARNING: We can ask the Lord to dispatch His warring angels, but if we stop there we are limiting God. We should ask God to intervene on our behalf, which gives Him the freedom and flexibility to send angels or help us in whatever way He chooses.

Angels Obey the Word of God

Psalm 103:20 says, "Bless the Lord you His angels, who are mighty, and do His commands, and obey the voice of His word." The Message Bible says, "So bless God, you angels, ready and able to fly at his bidding, quick to hear and do what he says. Bless God, all you armies of angels, alert to respond to whatever he wills." {eoa}

Why God's Timing for Your Ministry Is Always Perfect

How do you know when it is time to pull that infamous plug?

How do you know when it is time to fully enter in to a new

project?

How do you know when it is time take a rest?

How do you know when it is time to declare a resounding and enthusiastic, "Yes!" to a new opportunity?

How do you know when it is time to press the pause button on well-laid plans and hoped-for dreams?

How do you know when it is time?

So often, as leaders in the body of Christ, we anxiously search for the will of God and strongly desire to walk in His specific destiny for our individual lives. What a magnificent search that is ... to discover the will of God!

What a profoundly fulfilling and divine treasure it is to make the discovery of God's eternal purpose for a mere human life!

However, I have learned that just as important as the "what" question is the "when" challenge.

It's not only important to ask of the Father, "What should I do?" but it is vitally necessary to ask a follow-up question, "When should I do it?"

How do you know when it's time?

"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

Just because God has always worked through one venue in your life does not mean He is limited to working only on that single and well-traveled route. Although God never changes, I know Him to be a God who loves to stir up change!

It is in moments of change and transition that we must lean not unto our own understanding and we must determine to move ahead not in our own strength. I believe the reason the Father loves to change things for His children is simply because He

loves His children so much.

He loves to bring His children to a crossroad where they must listen for His voice in the deepest canyons of their heart.

He loves to present situations and circumstances to His children that are unable to be conquered with human strength alone.

He loves to allow mysteries and unanswered questions to linger in the hearts and minds of His dearly loved sons and daughters simply to give them the opportunity to cry out for His wisdom and for His perspective.

“It is He who changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who know understanding” (Dan. 2:21).

How do you know when it is time? I have an answer for that question: You humbly come to the Father and ask Him what time it is.

“Father, what time is it?”

“Is it time to move? Is it time to close the door? Is it time to walk through the open door? Is it time to wait? Is it time to turn around? Is it time to walk away?”

“Father, what time is it?”

And the Father, who is generous in the giving of eternal and unquestionable wisdom, will answer your question in His time. He is not in a hurry nor is He limited by your earthly schedule.

He knows exactly what time it is! He knows how old you are ... how many years you have left to serve Him ... and how many hours you have in a given day.

Perhaps you know precisely what God has called you to do but

are anxious and impatient concerning the timing of His plan.

Maybe you are weary and discern that it is time to take a break from the busyness of life and it is actually past time for you to rest a while.

Come to the Father, who is never anxious and who is never weary. Ask Him to give you His perspective on the timing of your life. Request the God of eternity to enter into the man-made calendar of your days and to bring order into the confusion of your jumbled hours.

And perhaps you should remind yourself from time to time that God is not constrained by your human calendar. What a vibrant truth it is that there are some things about time this side of heaven that you and I will not understand until the joy of eternity! There are also items on the eternal calendar of heaven that make absolutely no sense to our limited, human thinking.

The next time you ask the Father, "What time is it?" perhaps this is the answer that you will receive:

"He has made everything beautiful in its appropriate time. He has also put obscurity in their hearts, so that no one comes to know the work that God has done from the beginning to the end." (Eccl. 3:11). {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 justjoyministries.com.

This Spiritual Exercise Can Help Lower Your Bad Cholesterol Level

The Health Section of the *Wall Street Journal* recently carried an informative article, [Stress Raises Cholesterol More Than You Think](#). I've long understood this and have tried to educate others on this topic so that they might be able to better control their high cholesterol levels.

As the physicians in the article mention, if you have high cholesterol levels, it may not be your diet or lack of physical activity that is the culprit to your high cholesterol; it may likely be the unmanaged chronic stress in your life.

Here's a link to a different website—[How Does Stress Contribute to Cholesterol](#)—that offers a handful of medical explanations on how stress impacts the body and contributes to high cholesterol levels. This quote is taken from that site:

"Stress will increase your cortisol levels. (Cortisol is a hormone produced by your adrenal glands when you are stressed.) Under stress, cortisol delivers glucose to the body to help the fight-or-flight mechanism function properly. If cortisol is consistently doing this, blood-sugar levels remain constantly high, which can lead to not only hypo/hyperglycemia and diabetes but also elevated cholesterol

levels.” Inna Topiler, MS, CNS

Yes, a nutritionally-sound eating plan and regular physical activity are important aspects of a lifestyle that is conducive to manage stress and cholesterol levels. But the practice of biblical principles, [spiritual exercises](#) found in Scripture—God’s guidelines for living—are also hugely important.

Prayer, meditating on Scripture, attending church and being in community with other believers can be effective ways to cope with the stressors of life that you might be experiencing.

Dr. Harold Koenig, in [his research on the link between spirituality and health](#), writes the following: “There is rapidly growing evidence that **stress** and negative emotions (depression, anxiety) have (1) adverse effects on physiological systems vital for maintenance of physical health and healing, (2) increase susceptibility to or worse outcomes from a wide range of physical illnesses, and (3) may shorten the lifespan prematurely. Social support, in turn, has long been known to protect against disease and increase longevity. By **reducing stress** and negative emotions, increasing social support, and positively affecting health behaviors, R/S (Religious/Spirituality) involvement should have a favorable impact on a host of physical diseases and the response of those diseases to treatment.”

If you’re struggling to manage your cholesterol levels by diet and exercise alone, and that’s not working, consider reflecting on your recent stress levels. And address this important aspect of cholesterol management.

And look into the Bible to find relevant “spirit exercises” that might also help!

“But refuse profane and foolish myths. Instead, 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. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance” (1 Tim. 4:7-9, MEV).

Dale Fletcher, executive director of Faith and Health Connection Ministry, is a speaker and wellness coach who lives in Fort Mill, South Carolina. He conducts workshops and retreats on the link between the Christian faith and health. Connect with Dale at www.FaithandHealthConnection.org and on [Facebook](#).

When You Must Make Course Corrections in Your Walk With Christ

My brother is a captain with Delta and flies to Amsterdam several times a month. On the map, the route from Detroit to Amsterdam is a straight line. So to me, logically he should be able to get in the airplane, take off, set his heading and just drink coffee until he gets there.

But when I shared my logic with him, he laughed at me (something he spends way too much time doing). When I asked him what was funny, he said: “Things simply don’t work that way. I spend most of my time *making course corrections*.”

He explained: “Things are never as they seem to be. Even getting the very best information ahead of time is not enough. Conditions change. Circumstances arise. If I set an initial heading but don’t pay close attention to what is happening, I will never reach my destination.”

There are many factors that can take a plane off course. Wind changes in direction and intensity. Storms pop up. Volcanoes spew ash (although not very often thankfully). Sometimes the course change is only a few degrees. But in the long haul, a few degrees can be huge. Simply put, the situations are rarely like you thought they would be when you take off.

This applies to our lives as well. Proverbs 16:9 says, "A man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps." In other words, we make plans, but the Lord makes *course corrections*. Too often, we have a very limited mindset as to the role of the Holy Spirit. We hear that He came to convict us of sin. True, but only part of the truth. The rest of that verse says "and of righteousness" (John 16:8).

When Jesus left this Earth, our Father gave us the Holy Spirit. Sadly, we view the Holy Spirit as God's voice to tell us all the things we did wrong. He does reveal to us our sins, but even more important is that the Holy Spirit guides us in *righteousness*—right living, right thinking. He helps us make the right decisions.

Your heavenly Father wants you to succeed. He wants you to live in joy and in peace. He desires for your path to be straight. He wants you to reach your destination, which is a life of faith, trust and purity. The Holy Spirit is the one who will guide us correctly. He softly whispers, "Turn this way. Go that way." He makes *course corrections*.

As you journey this week in your Christ walk, pay attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Commit right now to listen for His *course corrections*. Don't wait until life is a mess and things are out of control to pay attention to the Holy Spirit. Quite often a *very small course correction* will avert and prevent tragedy.

And remember that God is for you. He is not keeping score. If you are off track, even if you are way off course, He is a

loving Father waiting patiently with open arms. He lovingly desires to help you adjust your direction and get back on track. Maybe you haven't been "flying" in a straight line and you can't even see to tomorrow. Stop and listen for His voice. He is speaking. Heed His course corrections and you will reach your destination. {eoa}

Prayer Power for the Week of Aug. 28, 2016

This week, thank the Lord that His Holy Spirit is directing your steps and making *course corrections* in your life. Pray that your sensitivity to His leading would be fine tuned so that you will remain on the right path. Ask Him to connect you with others of like mind and faith that you may work together to serve Him and expand His kingdom. Continue to pray for the upcoming elections, for revival to flood our nation and for Israel to fulfill God's purpose during these times. Remember those in authority who make decisions affecting our nation and the world. Pray for the protection of our cities, borders and shorelines, as well as for those who have suffered losses due to natural disasters, terrorism, war and crime (Prov. 16:9; John 16:8).

Before You Minister to Others, Make Sure You Are Armed With This

There are a number of questions we should ask ourselves before we minister or approach people, whether we are counseling them, encouraging or even prophesying over them. They include:

Do you value and love Jesus? Is your love for Him growing

every day? Do you cherish His wonderful Holy Spirit? Do you love God's children and do you love those who do not know Him? Do you genuinely care for the person you are ministering to?

Doing this helps ensure you are grounded in His love and grace.

Old Testament prophets and leaders were the few chosen spokesmen on behalf of God, when the Spirit of God was limited to a select few. But now, under the New Covenant, all of us in Christ have the wonderful Holy Spirit and we are all part of the royal priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may declare the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." In our present day and age, our ministry pattern and type is to be motivated by love, grace and mercy, grounded in Scripture as the foundation, in order to declare His goodness to all the world.

1. Our motivation needs to be love—love for God and love for others. Jesus summed up the law and the prophets when He was asked which Old Covenant command is the greatest. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

These verses do not state we are to love ourselves, but in saying "love your neighbor as yourself" it implies loving your neighbor as you know God loves you. When I was in India on a mission trip, I remember receiving a revelation of God's love for the children and adults we ministered to each week at an AIDS hospital. I saw His love for them and learned to love them as He loves them, even though it was tough and we heard how someone we ministered to several weeks before had gotten

sick and passed away. The love and mercy of God on these precious people was life-changing for me, and I was assured how we obeyed the call of God and shared the gospel that they responded to. That is God's love in action.

2. Our attitude is to reveal His love. 1 John 4:9-11 says, "In this way the love of God was revealed to us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we must also love one another."

Ministry is not about the one ministering; it is about the one who enables and empowers the minister by His Spirit. Revealing His love is an amazing privilege. The signs and wonders that take place are all to point to His love. For a season in my previous youth ministry we saw God manifest gold dust and diamonds and it overflowed to our larger church meetings for all ages. When asked what these things meant, the answer was that He was revealing His love and we are to do the same, first and foremost by sharing the gospel message.

3. Our character must apply His virtue and love in our lives. 2 Peter 1:5-7 says, "For this reason make every effort to add virtue to your faith; and to your virtue, knowledge; and to your knowledge, self-control; and to your self-control, patient endurance; and to your patient endurance, godliness; and to your godliness, brotherly kindness; and to your brotherly kindness, love." We need to continually grow in Him and it should be evident to others that we are making these efforts. This is to lead us to maturity, growing in His likeness and image, and fulfill Jesus' prayer in John 17 for us to be one as He is one with the Father.

God's love is the key to all ministry. {eoa}

Jared Laskey *is starting Destiny Open Bible Church in Virginia*

Beach, Virginia and is a Master of Divinity student at Regent University. 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. He also co-authored a book titled, Veronica's Hero.

Why You Might Be Vulnerable to Spiritual Indigestion

Can you imagine eating a good meal—but your body never digested it?

The food would just sit there in your stomach. While the food would age, nothing positive would come from it.

You would get sicker over time because your body never received the nourishment it was meant to receive.

Just like in our natural bodies, our spiritual “bodies” depend upon integrating our intake into who we are.

However, I believe that many people in the church today are spiritually constipated.

Such people may know God's Word, but it just sits in their minds, stagnant. Because they never digest and assimilate it, it doesn't become part of who they are.

As a result, the body of Christ is not as effective as it could be.

You might be vulnerable to spiritual constipation if you:

- Do not make time to fellowship with the Lord daily
- Are not putting what you learn from God's word into your daily practice
- Don't know or are not using your spiritual gifts to help others

Forgive me if this is TMI (too much information), but when I was a child and found myself in a constipated condition, my mother would say, "You need some 'working medicine.'"

While the "working medicine" didn't taste good, it certainly got my digestive system moving!

Here are three things to consider if you suspect you are dealing with spiritual constipation:

1. Anchor yourself in God. Let's face it—life is rough. Sometimes, you may feel like a ship trying to navigate stormy seas, helpless, at the mercy of the waves rising against you.

But when you are anchored in God, you feel secure in the midst of life's storms. "Anchor yourself in God" is actually the [first step of TBYT](#) because in doing so, your emotions are not tossed about with every situation that comes your way.

How do you anchor yourself? You seek the Lord first in starting your day. Your quiet time together may include prayer, praise and worship, journaling, study or whatever you are led to do that particular day.

After that empowering start, continue to fellowship with God as you go about your day. Seek His presence in which you'll find joy; seek His truth in which you'll find wisdom.

Decide that your relationship with the Lord supersedes all others. Therefore, you will take time to nurture that relationship every day.

2. Appropriate God's Word. When I'm studying God's word, I typically ask myself five questions:

- Who is speaking in the passage?
- To whom are they speaking?
- Where is God?
- Where am I?
- How can I apply this to my life today?

Appropriating God's word means that you want to grab hold of it and make it your own. So you ingest it, meditate upon it and ask the Lord to bring understanding. Finally, you look for ways to practice what you learn.

With practice and time, God's word will [mold and shape your character into Christ-likeness](#) so that you display His character to a world that desperately needs to see Him.

3. Assess and use your spiritual gifts. Did you know that each Christian receives one or more spiritual gifts at the time of salvation? We are meant to use these gifts to help meet needs in the church and out of the church.

Proverbs 18:16 says, "A man's gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men."

If you want God to open doors for you that no man can close, using your gifts is a great place to start.

You can [learn more about spiritual gifts](#), including taking a free test on how you can discover yours and how to use them.

In summary, we do not practice a dead religion. We practice a living relationship with Jesus Christ. That means forward movement.

So consider those three areas to help ensure your walk with the Lord remains strong and vital! {eoa}

Kimberly Taylor is the author of *The Weight Loss Scriptures and many other books*. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify to God's goodness and healing power. Visit takebackyourtemple.com and receive more free health and

weight-loss tips.

For the original article, visit takebackyourtemple.com.

Believing These Crafty Lies Can Lead to Infidelity

When I was in college, I spent a summer working in a lock shop. My supervisor, Rock, was an old, stocky African-American man with a raspy voice.

He was a hard-working man who had a nickname for everyone and was a great storyteller. One of my favorite stories he told was about a day he was asked to collect screws in the warehouse.

Apparently, the company was trying to save money and time for an in-house building project requiring screws. Rock's manager brought him into the warehouse and pointed to the high steel shelves. Then he asked Rock to remove all of the screws fastening the shelves to the walls.

Rock diligently got out a ladder and went to work, moving right to left. With each screw removed, the shelves stood in place. Finally, he ascended the ladder and removed the final screw on the last shelf. As he looked at the final screw in his hand, the last shelf leaned and crashed into the one next to it. The rest went down like thundering dominoes, discarding all of the contents in an enormously mangled mess.

The manager came running in to find a pile of destruction. Behind the debris was Rock standing sheepishly on a ladder holding one screw in his hand. They stared at each other until

Rock broke the silence: "This is your fault."

Marital affairs rarely happen randomly. They result from believing and justifying lies. In marriage, believing lies is like removing the fastening screws. It is dangerous, causes bad decisions and leads to broken marriages.

Exposing lies for what they are keeps us from falling into their traps and knowing the warning signs of infidelity can keep the dominoes from falling.

Here are the dangerous lies that lead to infidelity. Although I am speaking to husbands, I believe these apply equally to wives as well:

1. My wife should make me happy/I deserve to be happy.

Marriage is actually not about happiness. It may be a part of it at times. The problem is that this attitude is selfishness, plain and simple. When this attitude is nurtured, spouse blaming becomes routine; bitterness is right around the corner. The list of negative qualities in the spouse gets longer and longer. All it does is attempt to justify the selfish attitude so the person is free to chase happiness or the greener grass. Marriage is about dying to self, giving and loving in good times and bad. That's why it's so difficult, but also so rewarding.

2. There's nothing wrong with a little flirting. It's exciting. When someone finds you sexually attractive it feels good, particularly when you feel the same way about them. No one wants to lose that feeling, they want it to continue. So they justify it by telling this to themselves accompanied by: *It doesn't mean anything.* It does. It's hurtful to the spouse because it trains the heart to wander. It's natural to have those feelings, but playing with them gives the wrong person an improper place in the heart. [Flirting is like entering a river with a powerful current that ends at a large drop off.](#)

3. What she doesn't know won't hurt her. This attitude can take root in the person doing something they know would make their spouse upset. They recognize it's wrong and probably feel guilty, but don't want to stop. In an attempt to make themselves feel better, they simply tell themselves: *It's not like I'm hurting anyone.* It does hurt. Secrets cause disconnection. Spouses can intuitively sense when there is distance, no matter the degree. They may not address it, but they sense it. Believing a lie like this is just the beginning of allowing disconnection to enter the relationship. The distance just gets wider and wider until this person connects to someone else.

4. I have sexual needs. Food is a need. Sex is not a need, it's a desire. [An attitude such as this one gives sexual urges too much power.](#) It is also a subtle way to justify pursuing sex outside of marriage. Once it's justified in the person's heart and mind, acting on it becomes easier.

5. Our marriage problems are her fault. Marriage relationships consist of two people. One person might be more responsible, but not completely to blame. This is a convenient way to avoid responsibility. Anytime a person avoids responsibility, blames others or justifies themselves, they become colder. Walls of defense get fortified and the separation begins. Note: There are occasions where one person is completely to blame, but those are rare.

Can you think of any more?

BJ Foster is the content manager for allprodad.com and a married father of two. For the original article, visit allprodad.com.