

# Don't Be Fooled by 'All Natural' Food Labels

*All natural. Organic. Grass-fed. GMO-free.* Most Americans—three out of four, by some estimates—read food labels at the grocery store and are increasingly choosing items branded with such claims, believing they are making healthy choices.

But that's not always the case. In fact, while some food labels—such as “organic”—carry regulatory weight and guarantee what you're eating is not laden with potentially toxic chemical additives, others aren't regulated at all.

Foods labeled “all natural,” for instance, don't have to meet any standard set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or Department of Agriculture.

Yet 73 percent of Americans seek out foods labeled as “natural” when shopping for groceries, according to a new *Consumer Reports* survey out this week—even though manufacturers can use the term to describe processed items loaded with artificial additives, chemicals, and pesticides.

“Given this overwhelming consumer confusion, the [FDA] needs to act now to stop the misleading use of the ‘natural’ label,” argues Dr. Urvashi Rangan, Ph.D., director of the *Consumer Reports* Food Safety & Sustainability Center. “Ideally, the word should be banned from food packaging.”

Nicolette Pace, a registered dietitian and founder of NutriSource in New York, tells *Newsmax Health* the “natural” label is only one example of misleading food claims that can leave consumers confused at best, misled at worst.

“Food labels are misleading in the fact that they use terms that don't actually mean what they say,” she says. “Consumers

are confused by food labels because they trust what is written on the package and many feel that the wording suggests that a product is healthier than it really is.”

With that in mind, here are a handful of misleading food labeling terms, along with some consumer tips:

**1. Natural or all natural** – Foods that carry such labels may or may not contain a lot of artificial colors, flavors or additives. In fact, the FDA has no specific definition for “natural” or “all natural.” The new *CR* survey found two-thirds of shoppers falsely believe such labels mean that foods are free of pesticides and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and half incorrectly think the claims have been independently verified by the FDA or some other agency.

**Tip:** Read the ingredients list to see if “natural” items are in what you’re buying.

**2. Organic** – Products that carry this label must be made or raised with organic ingredients and certified by the USDA. An organic seal on meat means the animal was fed only 100 percent organic feed and given no antibiotics or growth hormones. But it doesn’t mean all food products are entirely organic; they can contain up to 5 percent artificial ingredients. In addition, foods containing up to 30 percent nonorganic ingredients can be labeled “made with organic ingredients.”

**Tip:** If the label isn’t clear, ask your grocer or your butcher how the food you’re buying was grown, raised or produced. If you can’t get a straight answer, shop elsewhere.

**3. Grass-fed beef** – Beef labeled “grass-fed” must have been raised primarily on a diet of grass and natural foods (without antibiotics or grain treated with them), but not entirely. But the label is also allowed for animals fed grains or antibiotics at some point to fatten them up before being butchered.

**Tip:** Look for a “grass-finished beef” label, which means the animal reached physical maturity on a diet of only grass, and consumed no grain or antibiotic-treated feed.

**4. Cage-free and free-range eggs** – Such labels mean your eggs came from chickens that were not caged all of the time. But they can include eggs from hens kept confined in a building (not a cage) or those with access to a small yard they could visit only briefly or occasionally.

**Tip:** Look for eggs from “pasture-raised” chickens—a USDA designation that means they were raised in farms that allow for 1,000 birds per 2.5 acres (108 square-foot-per-bird) and allowed free access to the outdoors year-round.

**5. GMO-free** – Federal laws don’t require manufacturers to list genetically modified ingredients on food labels, but some states are moving to require such labeling. GMO techniques allow for higher crop yields of grains, fruits, and vegetables, give them a longer shelf life and make them more resistant to herbicides and pesticides (allowing for greater use of agricultural chemicals).

**Tip:** Buy products labeled organic or those with the Non-GMO Project label—developed by a nonprofit organization for U.S. and Canadian natural foods retailers.

In addition to these misleading labels, a variety of health-related claims made by food manufacturers don’t always mean what you might think. For example:

**6. Zero trans fat** – Products that carry this label contain less than 0.5 grams of trans fats per serving, but are not entirely free of the artery-clogging fats linked to heart disease.

**7. Lightly sweetened** – FDA guidelines set no standards for this term, which means so-labeled foods can actually still be loaded with natural or artificial sugars.

**8. Made with** – Foods said to be “made with” real fruit juice, whole grains, or other products may contain very small amounts of the ingredient in question. For instance, veggie chips “made with real vegetables” are often potato chips sprinkled with vegetable powder. Better to go with products with “100 percent fruit juice” and “100 percent whole grains.”

**9. Low, light and reduced** – These terms imply the food has fewer calories and lower levels of fat, salt or sugar. But in fact they simply mean the product has less of those ingredients than the original variety—and how much less is anyone’s guess.

**10. High in fiber** – A food labeled high in fiber must provide 5 grams of fiber or more per serving, but FDA regulations don’t specify that it must be a natural source. Choose foods made from whole grains or other more nutritious options.

**11. Free** – This term implies the product contains none of the ingredient in question. But the truth is “free” actually means “very little,” under FDA guidelines. Such products can contain up to 5 calories, 0.5 grams of fat, 5 milligrams of sodium, or 0.5 grams of sugar—per serving.

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

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## **Miracle Prophecy: ‘I Am Ripping Out the Seams’**

On Sunday morning, I began our day by ministering on “Who Is Your Enemy?” The Lord asked me to share this understanding so we could press forward in our path of healing and restoration.

Unless we understand who is opposing us, we will not rise up to defeat the devil and take back what has already been won for us. This is a time we have access to revelation that will keep us in God's perfect timing.

### **A Miracle Prophecy and Parable: a Time to Rip Open Seams!**

Sunday was one of those days when you couldn't help but hear the voice of the Lord. He asks us to celebrate firstfruits because He desires we hear what He has to say. When we choose to hear and listen to His voice, we are positioned to prosper in a new way. This journey began on Sunday with the release of a tongues message, and the following interpretation:

"The way that you have been seamed together, and what you have displayed in days past, I am ripping out the seams. Some of you are being distressed because of the ripping that's going on, but there is light captured within you that cannot come forth. Therefore, if you will allow Me to rip these seams, what I have put on you will be more of a translucent mantle, and what is in you will be seen. Let My light shine! Let My light shine! Let My light shine through you!

"What you are seeing in the Earth in this hour, know that it is not just a move of revival. Although I will revive My people in a new way, this is not a move of revival. This is not just a move of restoration, though surely I will restore in this hour. I will restore what the canker worm and locust have eaten away, and the losses of the last season. But this is more than restoration. This is more than a move of transformation, but know that I will transform; I will make all things new.

"This move that I am releasing in the Earth is a move of *glory*. For I am bringing back the glory that was lost, even at the fall. My people shall release a move of glory in this hour, and this glory shall brighten up the dark places of the Earth. My glory will come and bring change. Darkness will not

be able to overpower My glory, but My glory will overpower darkness.

“This is your finest hour! Let the glory come—even the glory that was upon My Son on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was the glory that was released. It was not just on My Son, but I have put it into My sons and My daughters—that same inheritance of glory. This is the time I release My glory to brighten up and bring light out of darkness in this new season.”

At this point, Mary Ellen Jansen brought up to me a seam ripper. When she woke up that morning, the Lord told her to bring it to the service to give to me. She had no idea why she should bring it, but chose to be obedient to do so. Only the Lord could have orchestrated such an unusual prophetic act to confirm the message He had brought forward through a tongue and interpretation!

The revelation then continued:

“For this generation I am ripping out and bringing forth that new mantle, but I am also bringing a new source of provision for that next generation in these days. Where people thought you were just a weed to be plucked up and cast into the fire, I am going to transform those things into that which is glorious, to bring forth the fragrance of My glory. So invest into that which is to come, for the provision is here.

“In the last season, many of you were in a wineskin, and it was not a wineskin of Me. In that ripping of the seams, you must listen to Me and release your sound as you have never before. If you will take that sound and pierce those membranes that kept you from going forward, I will burst you forth. So arise, release your sound in this hour and see My kingdom established in your midst.” (Prophetic word by: Acijam Otxoa, Chuck D. Pierce, Barbara Wentroble, Diane Roussel, Raymond Banks.)

Know that there has been something sewn into you that is coming loose so you can come into a new structure. The Lord wants you to know He is ready to rip a seam out of your life and put a new translucent garment on you that He can shine through you. {eoa}

**Charles D. “Chuck” Pierce** serves as president of Global Spheres, Inc. (GSI) in Corinth, Texas. This is an apostolic, prophetic ministry that is being used to gather and mobilize the worshipping Triumphant Reserve throughout the world. Chuck also serves as president of Glory of Zion International Ministries, a ministry that aligns Jew and Gentile. He is known for his accurate prophetic gifting, which helps direct nations, cities, churches and individuals in understanding the times and seasons in which we live. Chuck has authored over 20 books, including the best-sellers *Interpreting the Times*, *Redeeming the Time* and *Time to Defeat the Devil*.

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## **Shane Idleman: ‘Pray for the Rapture, but Prepare for Tribulation’**

There is a great deal of dispute in the area of eschatology within the church—whether there will be a pre-tribulation rapture, a mid-tribulation rapture or a post-tribulation rapture. Each set of beliefs has their own interesting points of view.

Pastor Shane Idleman says this has become a challenging area for the church, considering what happened in 70 A.D. when Titus conquered Jerusalem.

“Is that where we are heading or have we already gone through it?” Idleman asks. “This subject can get pretty ugly. There are challenges with all of these views, and all of them have strong points. But I will say this, ‘I pray for the rapture, but prepare for the tribulation.’”

Watch more of Idleman’s message in the video above.

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## How to Take Temptation’s Exit Door

I recently meditated on 1 Corinthians 10:13, which promises:

*“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.”*

Here are some truths revealed in this Scripture to help you if you are struggling with temptation right now:

1. Temptation is common.
2. You don’t face a temptation that someone else hasn’t been through already.
3. God is faithful and knows how much temptation you can bear.
4. He doesn’t let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.
5. God always provides a way of escape with the temptation so that you can bear it.

While God Himself doesn’t tempt us (James 1:13), He does allow

it. But He does not put us in “no win” situations.

One of God’s names is “[Jehovah-Jireh](#),” which means, “His provision is seen.” In the case of temptation, this Scripture says that God’s provision is an escape route so that we can bear temptation.

Did you know that?

Here are some issues I’ve experienced with temptation’s escape route.

- I did not know there was an escape route at first. Because I wasn’t familiar with the Scripture, I also felt that I was at the mercy of temptation.
- Next, I did not believe there was an escape route, even though I saw the Scripture. So I didn’t bother to look for the escape route when I was tempted.
- After I finally believed there was an escape route, I sometimes did not ask God to show it to me because deep down, I wanted to give in to the temptation.

Actually, that last point was the one I dealt with the most!

By providing an escape route with every temptation, God is giving us an opportunity to know Him as faithful.

When we take the escape route, it’s also our opportunity to know Him as our Jehovah-Jireh.

So while we don’t seek temptation, we can train ourselves to ask the Lord, “Where is the escape route?” when temptations come.

These are the steps you should expect when you are using the escape route:

1. “This is the part where temptation comes.”
2. “This is the part where I ask God, ‘Where is the escape

route you've provided?' God speaks to me in His "still, small voice."

3. "This is the part where God reveals the escape route."

4. "This is the part where I take that escape route and thank God for His faithfulness."

5. "This is the part where my body complains (may be through getting tense, heartbeat gets faster, mild headache) because I told it 'No.'"

6. "This is the part where I re-direct my thoughts to something else and occupy my body with a useful activity."

7. "This is the part where my body relaxes and moves on to something else."

Many people don't take the escape route because they don't want to have to deal with No. 5. But the body can be like [a spoiled child](#). In order for your body to be well, you must provide discipline (a path of instruction) for it.

In most cases, the tension dissipates in 10 minutes or less. So if you must, set a timer for 10 minutes and occupy your mind and body with something else.

Remember, the escape route is just as real and present as the temptation itself is. We just have to seek it, see it, and take it! {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](http://takebackyourtemple.com) and receive more free health and weight-loss tips.

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

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# It's Time for You to Dream Again

My three-year old grandson, Boyce, has no problem dreaming big dreams. When you ask him what he wants to be when he grows up, Boyce shouts with every ounce of enthusiasm in his perpetually jumping body, "I want to build bridges ... fly an airplane ... and go to the North Pole and play with reindeer because they will like me."

Why is it that the young have no problem dreaming dreams that are charged with adrenalin and that are laced with human impossibility?

It seems that as the years go by, men and women often lose the capacity to dream. Life has a way of stealing from our very souls the rich delight of being able to dream a new dream ... to plan with childlike enthusiasm ... to hope with unlimited expectation ... and to look ahead with soaring vision.

*"The thief does not come, except to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).*

A three-year old lives a life awash in hope and expectation while a 60-year old slugs through the swamp of regret and pessimism.

A six-year old can't wait for Christmas ... for school to end ... to learn how to ride a bike ... and to have a Popsicle for dessert. A 50-year old often dreads the next birthday ... forgets the joy of youthful enthusiasm ... and ponders the mistakes of the past.

Why is it that the disappointments of life steal the raw pleasure of outrageous and hopeful expectation from the human soul?

*"... one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).*

It's time to dream again! It's time to look forward to all that God desires to do in you and through you whether you have one day of life remaining or 40 years of life still to be relished!

It's time to dream again!

Dreams were never intended to be the playground of only the young but the dreaming of dreams and the capacity to embrace vision has been given to all of humanity, whether young or old, as a life-long gift from the Father of all eternity.

It's time for YOU to dream again!

Perhaps tragedy or disappointment has caused your soul to petrify with no desire to look ahead or to dream about tomorrow. Perhaps the reality of living in the "same old ... same old" for too many years has pick-pocketed your youthful hopes and childhood enthusiasm.

If you do nothing else today, take the advice of Paul and simply *"forget those things which are behind."*

Forget the failures and the disappointments. Forget the years of famine and of dryness. Forget the criticism and the pain.

You see, forgetting about the past always precedes reaching forward to what lies ahead. If you are stuck in regret and in backward thinking, you will never dream another dream or set another goal.

*“Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old. See, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not be aware of it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43:18-19).*

The plans and purposes of God in a singular person's life do not come with an expiration date attached. If you have lost all hope of making any kind of difference for Christ and His Kingdom, perhaps it is time for you to hope again.

The ability to hope always begins with the commitment to ponder the past no longer. The day has come to resolutely determine that the past holds no enticement for our thought life or for our emotions.

God, the greatest Father in all of eternity past or all of eternity yet to come, never intended for the dreaming of dreams to be the nutrition of childhood. This is a season when the elderly are called to dream with enthusiasm and with wisdom.

Today is the time for the body of Christ to rise up with purpose and with strength in dreaming dreams together with the Holy Spirit. Allow His fresh breath and His new vision to permeate every area of your life!

*“ ‘In the last days it shall be,’ says God,  
‘that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;  
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:17). {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](http://justjoyministries.com).*

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## **How Do I Get From Where I Am to Where God Wants Me to Be?**

In the lobby of our ministry's headquarters in Orlando, Florida, we have an enormous picture covering an entire wall that shows a vast crowd at one of our African evangelistic campaigns.

People are often overwhelmed by the photo because it gives a small glimpse of the size of these massive events. It is especially inspiring to other evangelists who have been called, as we are, to reach as many people as possible with the gospel.

One day a young evangelist was visiting the office, and he stood in front that picture for the longest time just staring. Finally he pointed to the picture and said, "I've just been trying to figure out how to get to *that* from where I am now."

I think this is a common question. How do we get from where we are at the moment to where we know God is calling us? If this is where you are, you are in a good place, even if it doesn't seem that way right now.

You are in the place of having a dream that has been sent from

heaven. If this dream really came from God, absolutely everything you need is going to be provided as move forward. This is going to be the most amazing adventure of your life.

God has spoken, and He is going to do His part, but what is our role in this? We need to recognize that every journey begins with a small, single step. Walking into all God has for us in the future begins with us taking small steps in faith now.

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*Note: This Bible study has been taken from chapter 17 of Live Before You Die. {eoa}*

*Daniel Kolenda is a missionary evangelist who has led more than 10 million people to Christ face to face through massive, open-air evangelistic campaigns in some of the most dangerous, difficult and remote locations on Earth. He is president and CEO of Christ for All Nations and hosts an internationally syndicated television program.*

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## **The Tragic Elimination of the Apostolic From the Church**

It is tragic when the vast potential of an individual or entity is limited or eliminated because there is no room for

their gifts. In the case of a lion, when captured and encaged, it loses its aggressive roar because it is forced to be localized into the confines of a cage.

It may be a lion, but it is no different from a house cat because, like a house cat, it no longer has to claim its territory and hunt to satisfy its hunger, and is content to stay confined within a building!

To me, all of this is related to the condition of the local church after it ceases to recognize the ministry and function of apostles. This results in cutting off the pioneering spirit and apostolic call to conquer and expand kingdom influence.

(I don't necessarily think people have to use the title of apostle; the function is what is most important.)

In the case of church history, centuries ago we replaced the title (and consequently the function) of apostle and replaced it with the office of bishop. This vastly changed the nature and mission of the local and universal church. Apostles in the New Testament were the "sent ones" who, as military generals, were called to lead the church in mission as they were sent out to conquer new territories by planting churches and kingdom influence in key cities of the old Greco-Roman world. (For example, Paul the apostle started churches in over 30 key cities before the commencement of the first century!)

The office of bishop was primarily meant to oversee and administrate local churches: First starting in a local church (1 Tim. 3) which then evolved into overseeing a parish, then a diocese and then a region that included other bishops (hence they became archbishops or metropolitan bishops). However, as bishops became the apostolic successors it connoted a change from adventure, pioneering and conquering new territories (e.g., Paul, who prioritized going where Christ was not named as we read in 2 Cor. 10:10-14) to one of settling and maintaining the church and focusing primarily on church life,

polity and politics.

Not only that, but after the Protestant Reformation many (in response to the abuse of the bishops and popes) even eradicated the office of bishop and opted instead for a Presbyterian form of government (whether for good or bad) which only recognizes pastors, elder and teachers in the church. The eradication of the bishopric further isolated and fragmented the emerging evangelical church and resulted in numerous denominations and independent local churches. (For example, when the Eastern Church split from Roman Catholicism in the 11th century, it remained virtually unified and intact because they kept the bishopric and/or the episcopate.)

Getting back to apostolic ministry, it is essential that we recapture the function (if not the title) of apostolic ministry once again so the lions of the church are released from their cages to go out and hunt (metaphorically speaking) and expand kingdom influence! The early church never saw their congregations as separate from the apostolic ministry and function of their recognized apostles. As a matter of fact, for them local church and mission were inextricably connected to the apostolic, not only in word but in finances!

Read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, as well as Philippians 4 to see how local churches founded by Paul the apostle supported his apostolic calling and ministry (and not just their local congregations) and even sent people from their congregations to accompany him on his trips (e.g. Epaphroditus in Philippians 2, Barnabas in Acts 13, Silas in Acts 15).

Furthermore, Paul would install (pastoral) elders to care for the local congregations (Titus 1) and those who developed in the apostolic would travel with Paul to win new territory and/or establish the churches that were already founded. (For example, the epistles and the book of Acts highlight Timothy and Titus as well as some others who functioned apostolically with Paul to oversee churches and perform apostolic mission.)

Consequently, with the eradication of the apostolic from the local church, pastors have become the leaders of congregations. This has resulted in the body of Christ being led by caregivers instead of by strategic (military) generals sent out to conquer and establish new territory for the kingdom! The result has been disastrous as churches have now become self-focused and inbred instead of kingdom-focused and mission centered!

The first church was born on Pentecost Sunday with an apostolic/prophetic message by the apostle Peter. As we read the book of Acts, as long as the church was led by apostles it was constantly expanding and turning culture and cities upside down (Acts 17:6)! The church was born in apostolic mission and it was meant to continue to be connected to its original mission of preaching the gospel to all creation and discipling nations (Mark 16:15-18 and Matt. 28:19)!

As we have seen in the last 50 years in evangelicalism, the focus has now become "church growth" and the apostolic message of the New Testament has now become watered down to accommodate culture instead of transforming it—of encouraging Christians merely to witness instead of winning others, with the result that we have "mere" Christians who come to be entertained by professional worship teams instead of disciples who bring Christ in their marketplace mission from Monday to Saturday and don't depend on inviting their friends to Sunday services to hear their pastor (a professional cleric) preach a salvation message in order for their unsaved friends to get saved!

Contrary to this, in the book of Acts and the Gospels, the majority of all ministry, including salvations and healings, took place outside the temple and synagogue. They even had extravagant moves of the Holy Spirit in the streets without the hype and correct atmosphere we typically need to see God do a miracle during a Sunday service! (Acts 5 shows that even the shadow of the Apostle Peter healed the sick in the streets

and Acts 9 shows how Philip turned a whole city upside down with miracles in the street!)

As the church becomes more and more inbred and self-focused (because the apostolic has been rejected) many Sunday messages have to do with “self-actualization” and “self-empowerment” or motivational messages that build crowds who couldn’t give a hoot about the deteriorating political, social, economic and moral landscape of their communities. As we are lifting up our hands and praising God on Sundays, 3,000 babies are being aborted per day, and issues of poverty, injustice and alternate forms of family are being propagated by secular humanists who have captivated the minds of the millennials, while the emergent church is trying to captivate their emotions!

Furthermore, when apostles lead local churches an apostolic spirit of wisdom, revelation and courage comes upon entire congregations and releases all the saints to the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12) to fill up all things in creation (Eph. 4:10) which produces (marketplace) apostles and prophets of government, economics, education, science, media and creative innovators that are at the (prophetic) tip of the spear by applying the biblical worldview (apostolic writings) to their spheres of influence.

Hence, when a local church or movement of churches is not apostolically led and prophetically influenced they lose influence in their communities and culture because the apostolic mission of the church has been stripped away. Then, they become settlers who shy away from exercising bold faith and taking risks, and are more concerned about maintaining what they have.

While I am not against feeding the flock on Sunday and having great pastors who establish churches with great programs for their congregations, I am very concerned that we have a great lack of balance because of a lack of apostolic input.

Furthermore, things have become twisted because of the American consumerist “I, me, my” culture; even some bona fide apostles who lead influential local congregations have become more concerned with building their own empires than for the things of the kingdom.

In conclusion, I believe the following:

- Local churches need to embrace and celebrate the ministry and function of apostolic leaders so their congregations can be connected to an ever expanding horizon of ministry that is called to influence every realm of life and plant centers of influence in every major city of the world (a la Paul the apostle)!
- We need to embody the apostolic spirit in our local churches so that all the members called to the secular arena will carry with them apostolic revelation and courage so they are not merely witnessing but transforming their workplaces and culture.
- Local church pastors need the input and inspiration of apostolic leaders to be balanced in regards to their church mission and vision.
- Local churches and movements need to nurture apostolic leaders and financially support them so each local church is connected to apostolic vision and mission that is beyond their community and religious subculture. Thus they will continue to be pioneers instead of settlers who are continually in maintenance mode.

Finally, unless the body of Christ once again celebrates the ministry function of apostle, some of the greatest leaders in our generation will never emerge (or will be repelled) because “like begets like.” {eoa}

This article is from a chapter in Joseph Mattera’s book, *An Anthology of Essays on Apostolic Leadership*. [Click here to purchase a copy.](#)

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# Eat, Pray, Sweat: How to Strengthen Your Marriage From the Inside Out

It's a very exciting time for my husband Ben and me. This past weekend, our CrossFit gym moved locations to a larger, much more suitable space where we'll be over the next few months while we build.

Unfortunately, I was out of town celebrating my mom's recent engagement (another exciting event!!) and couldn't be there to witness our incredible community coming together with muscles, tools, trucks, and trailers to help move and organize us in just a few days (definitely putting their fitness to use)! On top of that, Ben and I are preparing to release my latest Christ-centered fitness book, one we wrote together specifically for couples striving to grow stronger together in body, soul, and spirit!

For this week's post, I wanted to give you a glimpse of the book by sharing an excerpt from one of the devotionals, as well as one of its 24 partner workouts! I pray it's a blessing to you and your significant other! Please feel free to tweet me or snapchat me at @dandersontyler with any questions or comments!

"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" (1 Timothy 4:8, MEV).

Being healthy as a couple is amazing. You're both more energized, less cranky, you sleep better, you're motivated, and you're even strangely excited about training again

tomorrow or trying that new kale and cucumber smoothie or cauliflower oats recipe plucked from Pinterest. After we've stuck with eating well and exercising long enough to turn experimental health kicks into habits, we often wonder what took us so long to start!

I saw a quote online recently that said most of us have no idea how good our bodies were designed to feel, and I couldn't agree more!

These warm, fuzzy, fitness-related feelings are an example, I believe, of one-way discipline that produces a "peaceful harvest," as Hebrews says. When we commit to a workout schedule despite our excuses, and prepare healthy foods despite the inconvenience, we're rewarded with an inner peace and a soul-deep satisfaction that accompanies God-honoring discipline.

But physical training isn't the be-all and end-all of a healthy marriage. Far from it.

Today's verse makes it clear that it is *godliness* that carries the most value. After all, there are plenty of couples out there with killer physiques and enviable work ethics who exercise for the sole purpose of bringing honor and glory to themselves, not to God. As Christians, everything we do is to be done "heartily as to the Lord."

To be married couples who are thriving, and not merely surviving, we need to be fit all the way around: mentally, emotionally, physically, but most of all, *spiritually*. Our bodies are simply the vessels God has molded to house the immortal part of us, our souls. It is our souls, comprised of our mind, will, and emotions, that will remain with us throughout eternity. Our bodies will return to dust and be replaced with glorified ones that won't ever need to step foot in a gym or go on a diet, hallelujah! While the Lord desires, and has commanded, that we honor Him by how we take care of

our bodies, such obedience is shortsighted if we neglect to grow closer to Him, and to our spouse, outside of the gym.

Today, make it a point to pray with your spouse. Read and meditate on a chapter in Psalms or a parable in the Gospels with them. Read this or another Christian devotional together and talk about how you can apply what it says to your life as individuals and as “one flesh” joined to be a picture of Christ and His bride within your marriage covenant.

“If you have a Bible that’s falling apart, you’ll have a life that’s not.” – Adrian Rogers

### **Warm Up**

30 Walking Lunges with Twist Over Lunging Leg (15 each leg)

30 Air Squats

10 Walk-Out/Walk-Ins

30 Jumping Jacks

15 Jump Squats

400-Meter Run (0.25 miles)

### **Workout**

Set a timer for 15 minutes and perform as many rounds as you can of the following circuit:

- 10 Partner Push-Ups with reach
- 10 Jump Squats, alternating with your partner each rep
- 20 Stationary Lunges, alternating with your partner each rep
- 10 Right Side Plank Hip Dips, alternating with your partner each rep
- 10 Left Side Plank Hip Dips, alternating with your partner each rep

## **Exercise Instructions (in the order given):**

### **Air Squats**

1. Stand with your feet spread apart at a distance slightly wider than the shoulders. Position your feet so that your toes angle out. This angle varies from person to person, but should be about 30 degrees. Keep your weight on the heels to prevent yourself from rolling up onto the balls of your feet.
2. Keep your chest up, shoulders back, head up. This helps promote a nice, safe, intact lumbar curve.
3. Place arms straight out in front of your chest. The arms should be in a comfortable position as they act as counter balance to the motion of the exercise.
4. Bend your knees as you lower yourself down. Pretend there is a chair behind you that you're reaching back to sit on. Your knees should track over your feet and never jut out over them. In other words, your knees should be pointing in the same direction as your toes. If you find your knees starting to cave in, focus on pushing them out. A good way to achieve this is by imagining you are tearing the floor apart with your feet.
5. The push back up should be generated from your hamstrings and glutes. Your chest and head should remain pointing straight forward. As you rise, your arms will probably lower back to your sides naturally. Make sure your knees keep tracking with your toes and do not begin to buckle inwards. Also be sure to keep your lumbar curve intact (curved). Generally speaking, if you have your chest and head up, your lumbar curve will be in the correct position.

### **Walk-Out/Walk-Ins**

1. Begin in a standing position. Bend over to touch your toes and walk your hands out until you are in a plank position.

2. Walk the hands back in to your feet keeping legs as straight as possible, and repeat for the given number of repetitions.

### **Jumping Jacks**

1. Begin by standing feet together with arms at your sides.
2. Bend your knees and jump, moving your feet apart until they are wider than shoulder width. (You should be on the balls of your feet.) At the same time, raise your arms all the way overhead.
3. Maintain a slight bend in your knees as you jump your feet back together and return your arms to your sides. Repeat for the given number of reps.

### **Jump Squats**

1. Refer to the "Air Squat" description.
2. Jump explosively to rise out of the squatting position.
3. With control, land in a squat position to complete one rep.

NOTE: Remember not to let your knees jut over your toes or let them cave inward as you jump.

### **Partner Push-Ups with Reach**

1. Face your spouse in your preferred push-up position (see below for instructions on modified and traditional push-ups).
2. Perform a push-up at the same time as your spouse.
3. At the top of the push-up, rotate your torso to the right while bringing your right hand off the floor. Lift your right arm up to the ceiling, feeling a stretch through your chest as you gaze toward your fingertips. Hold for 3 seconds, then return your hand to the floor to complete another repetition.

4. Repeat on the opposite side.

### **Stationary Lunges**

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, torso upright with arms hanging straight at your sides.

2. Take a slow, controlled lunge forward with one foot. As you lunge, lower your body and allow the lunging knee to bend until your thigh is parallel to the ground.

Push explosively off the lunging foot to return to the starting position. If performing walking lunges, push through the heel of the lunging foot to bring the back foot to meet it.

### **Side Plank Hip Dips**

1. Lie on your left side with your knees straight.

2. Prop your upper body up on your left elbow and forearm.

3. Lift your hips until your body forms a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders. Feet are stacked on top of each another.

4. Pull your bellybutton in and keep your chest high and hip lifting toward the ceiling.

5. Extend top arm straight up into the air.

6. Slowly lower your hip until it barely grazes the floor.

7. Shoot the hip back up to the start position.

NOTE: To make this movement easier, you can place the top foot a few inches in front of the bottom one, or drop to your knees and place them on top of each other. Make sure your hips don't sag!

Our Christ-centered fitness book, *Perfect Fit*, is available

for pre-order until Friday. Click [here](#).

**Diana Anderson-Tyler** is the author of Creation House's [Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness](#), [Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness](#), and her latest book, [Immeasurable: Diving into the Depths of God's Love](#). Her popular website can be found at [dianadeadlifts.com](http://dianadeadlifts.com), and she is the owner and a coach at [CrossFit 925](#).

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

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## The Restoration of Your Manhood Takes Only This

Bob was a middle-aged man who lived alone in a small town in Kentucky. His father had died years earlier and left him a barn full of stuff he had collected over the years. In the middle of the rickety barn was an old, dust-covered car that hadn't been started in years.

One morning an elderly man named Barney stopped by to inquire about the car. He told Bob he was the original owner and shared the story of having to sell it due to financial hardships. As the old man continued to recount how long it took to save the money and the memories made in it, Bob asked him if he would want to buy it since he had no need for it or children to pass it down to.

Without hesitation, the man told him to name his price. With no real knowledge of what the car was worth, Bob asked him if he thought \$500 was a fair price. Knowing the real value, the old man offered him thousands higher. However, Bob stuck with

original price, handshakes were made, and the deal was done.

Several months later while in town, Bob saw Barney driving an electric blue, 1970 Dodge Dart Swinger with a bumblebee stripe and dual-hood scoops. He couldn't believe this was the same car that sat in the old, rickety barn! With utter excitement, Barney told him about the whole restoration process including how expensive it was to restore it back to its original state.

Restoring anything to its original state is an expensive and lengthy process. The secret is to find someone who understands the true value and is willing to pay the price in time and money.

From a spiritual angle, at some point, we were or are currently the old car in the barn. The great news is that Jesus saw our dust-covered, dilapidated condition and willingly paid the ultimate price for the opportunity to restore us back to our original condition. Hence the journey we're on—being restored back to the image of a great, mighty and loving God. This means we can be great, strong, courageous, mighty and loving too!

Our part is to “give in” to the process of a manhood overhaul. Allow the original Creator to grind, cut away and smooth out the areas in our lives that are imperfect from years of abuse, neglect, or are just worn out. This is how the restoration of our manhood takes place. {eoa}

**JT McCraw** is the men's pastor at [Bethel World Outreach](#) in Brentwood, Tennessee and the founder of the [BE MEN Movement](#), where he provides oversight for this multi-ethnic, multi-site men's ministry, focusing on engaging and equipping men to serve Christ. Presently they have locations in Tennessee, Texas, Florida, Ohio, Louisiana, Alabama and Arizona. JT lives in Franklin, Tennessee with his wife of 24 years and their five children. You can follow JT on Twitter [@jtmccraw](#).

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# 5 Reasons Why Downsizing Now Will Pay Off in the Future

OK, by a show of hands, who knows someone—anyone—who moved into their extravagant *dream home* just as the kids were getting ready to leave home, or just before their bankruptcy? Four thousand square feet; four bathrooms; increased financial stress; and a three-car garage.

Maybe you're a 30- or 40-something couple with kids and you're feeling a little crowded. Maybe you think you might like the prestige associated with that up-and-coming neighborhood. Maybe college looks far enough in the future that you're tempted to put your money into a more tangible investment you can enjoy in the here and now?

You've done the math. You figure if you can start over with another 30-year mortgage, maybe stop eating out so much, work an extra weekend every month, do stay-at-home vacations, scale back on charitable giving, promise not to buy another new car for ten years (Who are we kidding?), then this bigger house thing is a go.

It's tempting, isn't it? [And if something extravagant is almost in reach](#), doesn't that mean we can stretch just a little more and it's ours?

But reality check—best practices suggest taking quite the opposite path. Something bigger and glitzier may be floating around in our dreams; but instead, as our children grow through the teen years and as we look to the future, there are abundant reasons simplification can be exactly what the doctor ordered.

Read more, think about it yourself, and get involved in the discussion about why downsizing your life today will pay off in spades tomorrow.

**1. Financial stability** – Here's a word of advice from someone in an empty nest. Financial stability is more fun than a big house, more exhilarating than a cool car, and better for the marriage relationship than pretty much anything else.

Stress. Stress? You don't want it. Stress from overextending is bad for the heart, bad for digestion, bad for the career and bad for the marriage. If that's not enough, financial stress reduces quality of life across the board.

**2. More freedom to be generous** – When we free up our resources from an unnecessarily extravagant home, we free up our resources to invest in the things that have a much more significant "satisfaction" rate of return. We can invest in local charities, our church, relieving world hunger, helping our neighbors, art, scholarships at our college and so much more. It's well-documented that money spent improving the lives of others brings more satisfaction.

**3. Less clutter to take care of** – Extra space must be maintained and heated and cooled and monitored. Then we tend to spend more on additional stuff we really don't need in order to fill the space.

**4. Reduced carbon footprint** –We're already overusing the world's precious resources. Downsizing reduces our carbon footprint; it's a responsible "take care of the world" thing to do.

**5. The opportunity to invest in what really makes us happy** – This is more fun than almost anything else. Downsizing increases the odds of taking more family vacations, debt-free college for our children, and [fun adventures as empty nesters](#) down the road.

**Derek Maul** is the author of five books, a nationally recognized men's resource, a committed encourager and a pilgrim in progress. He divides his time between writing and traveling to speak about the fully engaged life.

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