

# Over-the-Counter Pain Relievers Could Spell Trouble

A government panel recently recommended taking one aspirin a day to help prevent cardiovascular disease and colon cancer.

The recommendation adds more fuel to the debate over the benefits of aspirin and some other pain relievers. For some people, they may do more harm than good.

Robert Karnes is fine now. But not long ago he panicked when he thought he was having a heart attack.

“The chest pains were pretty bad and they were really scary,” Karnes told *CBN News*.

As it turned out, he wasn't having a heart attack. His chest pain was caused by ulcers brought on by taking an over-the-counter pain reliever for sinus problems, which he picked up regularly at the corner drugstore.

“It surprised me. I had no clue,” he said.

The type of pain reliever Karnes took is called an NSAID, short for non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. NSAIDs include naproxen (e.g., Aleve), ibuprofen (e.g., Motrin, Advil) and aspirin. NSAIDs are responsible for a reported 16,000 deaths annually and 100,000 hospitalizations for kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and ulcers.

“So really everyone's at risk. But really people who are at the greatest risk are people who are taking other medications that can interfere with the stomach,” gastroenterologist Dr. Daniel Neumann told *CBN News*.

“Say someone who's on a blood-thinning medicine, people who are on steroids for other medical diseases, the elderly, people who are hospitalized, have other stresses on their

intestinal system, can also be at much higher risk than the general population," he said.

Dr. Neumann says Karnes was wise to seek help right away. He advises everyone to talk with their doctor about all the medications they're taking, including over-the-counter drugs. He says to discuss the amount you're taking, how often and if you're experiencing any unusual symptoms.

"[If you] develop a change in the color of your stool, black, tarry bowel movements, you start to have vomiting, nausea, throwing up stuff that looks like coffee, black, coffee-ground-like material, even in the absence of pain this could be a sign of intestinal bleeding. Stop that medication and notify your doctor right away," he said.

Inflammation is often the root of many of our aches and pains, such as joint discomfort from arthritis. NSAIDs reduce inflammation, bringing relief.

The good news is many of us can reduce painful inflammation a different way, without taking an NSAIDs, by switching to an anti-inflammatory diet.

That means avoiding sugar, white carbohydrates such as bread and pasta, trans fats (also known as hydrogenated oils), industrialized vegetable oils and chemical food additives.

These highly inflammatory items are found in abundance in processed foods and in many restaurants. On the other hand, anti-inflammatory foods are the ones in their original state, which includes unrefined fats like fish oil, coconut oil and olive oil, and raw nuts, avocados and colorful fruits and vegetables. {eoa}

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# Samuel Rodriguez: 'A Bunch of Elijahs Are Rising'

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez says there is little doubt that today in America we are reliving 1 Kings 18 and 19. Spiritual darkness indeed has covered our land, and the spirits of Ahab and Jezebel are running rampant.

By no means, however, is Rodriguez giving up on America—quite the contrary. It is why the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference wrote his latest book simply titled *Be Light*. Along with many others, Rodriguez is pressing to initiate a movement to “awaken the church,” for believers to rediscover their identity in Christ and to reflect the light of Jesus to overcome the darkness.

“Ahab and Jezebel are alive and well in our country, and the vast majority of Christians are afraid to speak up for truth,” Rodriguez told me in a recent interview. “The thing is, the church has allowed this to happen. We are a Facebook church because we care more about likes—about people liking us—than we do about sacrifice and about biblical truth.

“We are a selfie generation and we’re hiding under a bowl that must be removed. We are the ones who are light in these dark days. We know who we are in Christ. We have to remove the bowl. My objective in writing this book is to equip people to recognize that they are the light and to prompt them to get out their comfort zone. We need to expose the darkness for what it is, live out the light and the enemy will flee.”

I’ve interviewed Dr. Rodriguez a few times, and I’ve listened to him preach a couple of times. What I’ve always admired about him is his genuineness, his passion for God’s Word and

his fire to help bring God's children—His church—to a higher level in Christ. He's one of the preachers who have inspired me in my own ministry and with this column, Step out of the Boat. My vision is to help Christ followers realize they need to come out of the comfort zones of our own lives, strengthen their faith and to come to a more intimate relationship with Jesus.

## **Be Light**

*"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16, MEV).

And how do we do this? Dr. Rodriguez says in his book that we "must begin by unifying our hearts, minds and lives to God. If we can find true unity with Him, we will begin to see the power like that of the laser light in our lives."

But the desire must be there. In fact, Dr. Rodriguez says aligning our light with God's is predicated on that desire.

"We must develop a redemptive view of the world around us, pouring out mercy to others, bringing grace to those in need and denying ourselves. We *must* (emphasis mine) hate sin the way God does, knowing that sin always keeps us from being on the same wavelength as God. Being one with the Lord, and joining Him in the pure light of salvation requires *everything* (emphasis mine) from us; we are one with Him when we are hidden in Him, away from the darkness of sin and selfishness."

In other words, as Dr. Rodriguez says, we must allow our internal temperatures to heat up to a boiling point. As Christ followers, we must be transparent and allow God to reveal our deficiencies that keep us from being that white-hot light He wants us to be.

"Just as sunlight reveals particles in the atmosphere, God's light exposes the 'pollution' in our lives," he writes.

“Professor W.F. Adeney reminds us, ‘We never know how odious our sin is till we look at it in God’s light. Hidden and forgotten sin is not repented of. Pride grows on the graves of buried sins.’”

I know what some may be thinking. “I don’t want my sin exposed. I don’t want to be transparent.” In that regard, I grok you. I’ve been there. But to grow in the Lord, to be free of guilt and shame, I knew I had to bring some things into the light. I may still be struggling to overcome some things, but my sins are no longer hidden in the darkness.

Don’t be afraid to be transparent. God knows your heart, and if you truly want to be His light, He will bring people into your life who are a safe haven for you and you will discover freedom. As Dr. Rodriguez writes, “Transparency is a quality that needs practice and nurturing to become part of who we are. If we allow ourselves to be fully known, we will find a new freedom with God and others.”

## **Elijahs Rising Up**

Another thing I love about Dr. Rodriguez is his confidence in the younger generation. While many are lamenting a belief that millennials are leaving the church in droves and that they have abandoned a pursuit of God altogether, Dr. Rodriguez chooses instead to believe this generation will produce an army of warriors to spark transformation in the church and to reflect the light of Christ.

I pray diligently on a daily basis that my daughter, Rachel, 14, and my son, Joshua, 12, will be right on the front lines with them. I’m comforted by the fact that we’ve got three in our office—Jenny Rose Curtis, Jessilyn Justice and Taylor Berglund—whose lights shine daily and that I’m confident will carry the torch for Christ into the future.

“Yes, the church is tolerating corruption and perversion, but here is the redemptive good news, and I’ve seen this

happening,” Rodriguez says. “There is a generation arising that is going to surprise all of us. There are a bunch of Elijahs arising that are Spirit filled and do reflect God’s light. They’ve been pushing the plow. Their day is coming when the mantel of leadership will be placed up them. And that day is right around the corner.”

So, spirits of Ahab and Jezebel, watch out. The light of God is coming.

And as I always like to say, “there is that.” {eoa}

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## 12 Weird Items in Church Bylaws

Sometimes reading a church’s bylaws is like taking a trip to the twilight zone.

Some are lengthy, very lengthy. Some are irrelevant. Some are unreadable.

And others are weird, really weird.

Knowing that I would get some incredible responses from my Twitter followers, I simply asked them if they were a part of a church with some weird bylaw provisions. Keep in mind these are provisions in bylaws, not in a policy manual.

Here are my 12 favorites:

**1. No one can bring a colored drink to church, especially red Kool-Aid.** I wonder how many church members were sneaking that stuff in their flasks.

**2. An active member is defined as one who gives at least one penny a year.** Oh my. That would cut the Baptist church rolls in half.

**3. There will be very specific guidelines regarding the church van (but the church doesn't own a van).** The new bylaws amendment will be called "the Uber amendment."

**4. Men serving communion are required to wear a coat and tie.** I am totally flabbergasted they don't have to wear pants.

**5. The church has to have a minimum of five deacons (but the church only has 20 members).** It may get complicated if one of the available deacon candidates is a preschooler.

**6. No one can sell cassettes on church grounds.** But 8-track tapes and vinyl records are fine.

**7. No one is allowed to bring glitter to church.** I am definitely boycotting this church!

**8. No church member can be a part of a secret society.** I wonder if that includes Democrats and Republicans.

**9. No church member can drink alcohol except during the Lord's Supper.** So that's why the Lord's Supper day is always such a high attendance day!

**10. No one can sell paintings on church grounds.** This issue is indeed a pervasive sin in many churches.

**11. No one can come to church with diarrhea.** That's OK. They probably wouldn't pay much attention to the preaching anyway.

**12. Members cannot have assigned pews.** But you are allowed to bring your own personal chair.

I know you readers have some good ones to add to this list! If not, give me your prayerful insights into these 12 issues.

It should be fun. {eoa}

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## 9 Reasons Why Supplements Are Critical to Your Diet

Diseases and cancers are widespread in our countries, many of them nutrition related. A large percentage of people are faced with depression, fatigue and ongoing ailments.

Many in America have followed the USDA suggestions for meal plans, and over half the population are consuming a lower quality multi-vitamin. In contrast, communities are also educated the proper diet alone should suffice for all the nutrients needed by the body, but is it *really enough*?

Here are [nine reasons why high-quality supplements are a must](#):

**1. Standard American diet.** In order to nourish the body and mind, more is needed than a variety of grains, legumes and dairy products. Each of these foods is void of nutrition, holds toxins and tends to take away nutrients from the body. For many, grains and legumes cause damage to the body, which further adds to nutrient depletion. Dairy also can cause ongoing inflammation within the body.

**2. Depleted soils.** Farmers plant crops year after year and do not allow the lands to rest, causing soil depletion. This, in turn, causes a loss of nutrients in foods. The farming industry is well-aware of this, and they add fertilizers to help plants "survive." Modern methods for growing fruits and veggies are used to add more sugar content (enhanced flavor), and not increase value nutritionally.

According to *Not on the Label*, plants grown in this manner have three-fourths fewer micronutrients. If animals consume nutritionally lacking plants, they are also undernourished. One study in the United Kingdom shows the following declines in copper intensities: dairy (90 percent), meat (55 percent) and veggies (75 percent).

**3. Depleted Minerals in water.** Current production methods have depleted mineral reserves found in water. Many families use water filters to “filter out” unsafe measures of toxins while decreasing consumption of needed magnesium. It is strongly possible individuals consuming water higher in calcium content are developing heart disease due to the lack of magnesium content.

**4. Low-nutrient diet plans.** Lower-calorie diets are followed by many trying to shed extra pounds. Low-calorie diets are also low-nutrient diets. Food quality *truly matters*, and the body is naturally made to want to “consume more” if it is *not* being given the *right kind* of nutrition.

**5. Grain-fed cattle and conventional dairy.** When animals such as cattle are fed grains, they will become malnourished over time. Giving grains provides low levels of antioxidants, micronutrients, fatty acids, minerals as well as vitamins. Grain-fed meat is also more susceptible to carrying toxins, as compared to grass-fed.

Most grocery store milk and dairy products are not nutritionally good for you. Nutrient content is reduced, and the process of pasteurization kills much of the nutrients. Although not all grain-fed meat and conventional dairy may be avoided, it is definitely a good idea to add high-quality supplements.

**6. Exposure to toxins.** The body needs sound nutrition to remove toxins that may be present. If the body is lacking, then it cannot deal sufficiently. God created our bodies to

consume natural foods that do not suffer the conditions presented above.

Our food supply has dramatically changed, so it is truly necessary to add high-quality supplements the body can use. Our bodies also deal with more and more toxins every day (plastic toxins, water toxins, industrial toxins, food toxins, stress). Therefore, if we choose to live healthy lives, then we *must choose* healthy supplements.

**7. Malabsorption with age.** Research studies provide evidence children need more nutrients to grow healthy and strong. Other studies also show as people age (and take more medications) nutrient absorption becomes problematic. Nutrients are needed in a more absorbable form in the body.

**8. Increasing nutritional needs with exercise.** Exercise can substantially deplete reserves in the body. Therefore, more nutrients are definitely needed. Athletes are well-known for suffering from deficiencies in nutrition by adding more low-nutrient foods that contain more toxins. Exercise increases the nutritional needs of the body.

**9. High-quality supplements add life.** Every day we make decisions that allow us to “choose life” or “choose death.” This includes the area of nutrition and health. High-quality supplements, which are specifically made to *add life* to the body, are a *must*. A good supply of the right nutrients will prolong life expectancy and add to the quality of living.  
{eoa}

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

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# Prophecy: The Time for Awakening Has Come

It was rainy and cold outside in Virginia Beach. We were at Cape Henry on the Atlantic shore of Virginia—named in 1607 in honor of Henry Frederick, the prince of Wales—and home to one of the greatest revivals in history some 300 years later.

Cape Henry goes down in American history as the site of the first landfall of Frederick, son of King James I of England, during his expedition from Great Britain to North America. When they arrived, the British colonists erected a wooden cross and gave thanks for a safe landing.

King James devoted pieces of the land for the intent of spreading Christianity in his First Charter of Virginia, which reads: “We greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their Desires for the Furtherance of so noble a Work, which may, by Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the Glory of his Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance ... .”

## **A Significant Day**

Our visit to Cape Henry on April 29 on a prayer assignment was more than coincidental. It was a divine appointment. April 29 was the same date Frederick and his crew landed at Cape Henry and a nation was born. That date in 1607 was also the eighth

day of Passover and at sunset on April 29, 2016, began the eighth day of Passover.

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My good friend Rick Curry was standing alone, considering the history. He decided to Periscope and make an appeal to heaven right there. Suddenly, he realized he was not alone. Three ladies toting flags as part of an intercessory prayer assignment were standing behind Rick. One of them interrupted him.

“They said Pat Robertson had prayed for them that morning,” Curry says. “They said they had a word they would meet a man there, and since I was the only one there, they assumed it was me to whom they were to give a message.”

Here was the message: “The Lord would say to you, ‘The appeal has been heard in the court of heaven and the time for awakening has come!’”

“I was speechless. They asked me if that meant anything to me. We talked for a while, and it was such a wonderful and amazing encounter. Totally unexpected. They said they had read two books on appeal to heaven—[The Next Great Move of God](#) by Jennifer LeClaire and *Appeal to Heaven* by Dutch Sheets—and had heard the dream. They had no idea I was the one who had the dream when they approached me.”

### **A True Prophetic Swirl**

Curry is referring to a dream he shared in my book about seeing the generations come together in an auditorium. In the dream, Curry saw Sheets waving a flag with an evergreen tree on the front and writing across the top that he could not make out.

When he awoke, he thought the flag was symbolic, but his wife

felt an unction to search it out. Sure enough, it was the appeal to heaven flag has become a banner what I believe will spark the next great move of God. Sheets has his own prophetic swirl around the flag that he shares in his book. When Curry and Sheets compared notes, they were both stunned—and encouraged.

“Tell everyone you know,” Curry says. “Things are about to change dramatically! The nation is ready for a move of the Spirit sweeping millions into the kingdom of God! We are inspired by hundreds, so encouraged by thousands, but many, many more are turning their hearts to the Father!” {eoa}

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## **Why You Shouldn't Simply Ignore Your Pain**

Pain can come packaged in many different ways. While one can encounter this burden through the loss of a loved one, another could have lost a job or even found out that they're battling a life-threatening sickness.

Regardless of how, pain is very, very real. Pain is not something we can avoid in life, no matter how hard we try. It's a vital part of our human existence, and if treated correctly, will harvest much wisdom and knowledge.

I've heard the phrase “Just push through the pain” more times that I can count in my lifetime. And what seems like an encouraging and inspirational memo for those going through a tough time, any doctor will tell you that this is simply not a good idea. Why?

Because ignoring the pain you have now can possibly cause

further damage in the future. It's important to fix what is broken. Ignoring the hard parts of life will only make life more difficult.

Pushing through the pain is just as bad as ignoring it. You must acknowledge your pain in order to find healing and redemption. If you're struggling with depression and anxiety, then maybe it's time to fully admit that you're struggling so that you can find help.

If you're fearful of what the future has in store for you, then maybe it's time express that fear to a friend or loved one so they can better understand what you're going through. If your heart is hurting and you've yet to open up about the pain, then maybe it's time to drop your guard and start letting people see your brokenness. People can't help you if they don't know you need it.

Regardless of what you are going through in life, you must choose to look your pain in the face and make a conscious decision to fight, not flee. Pain can sometimes be a tricky subject to deal with, but it's better to deal with it rather than never attempt at all.

There were plenty of times in my life where I ignored what I was going through because I thought I didn't have enough time, or that my pain wasn't that big of deal in the grand scheme of things. I couldn't have been more wrong about my assumptions of how to deal with pain, and it was until I found myself Googling *painless ways to commit suicide* that I realize how badly "pushing through the pain" had truly affected my life.

I never once thought to reach out to people because I was afraid of what others may think. I failed to realize that we're all broken in some way or another and that not reaching to anybody quickly put me in a corner of loneliness and despair.

The moment I found hope was a moment I'll never forget. It was

a moment where I chose to accept the reality that I was hurting and open myself to the comfort found in the truth of God and actions of those around me.

I found people who related to my struggles and found themselves just as broken as I had felt. It was a rejuvenating experience to admit my pain, to really own it instead of trying to ignore. I learned throughout my life that time and time again, pushing through the pain would only make things worse. {eoa}

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

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## **Is It Un-Christian to Choose Cremation Over Burial?**

When deciding what to do with a human body after death, the number of people choosing cremation instead of burial is skyrocketing.

Nearly 60 years ago, less than 4 percent of the population chose cremation. Now it's about 50 percent. One reason for the increase is that cremation is generally less expensive than burial.

However, evangelical pastor John Piper says Christians should choose burial, not cremation. He is quick to point out that he does not believe cremation is a sin, and therefore, Christians should not condemn or ostracize other Christians who choose cremation over burial.

But he does believe that burial is vastly preferable. In [a recent blog](#), he offered Bible verses to support that view.

First, in teaching about the dignity of the human body, he says Scripture leads away from burning toward burying:

John 1:14 states Jesus “became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.”

Philippians 3:21 says Jesus will “transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.”

1 Corinthians 6:20 says, “Glorify God in your body.”

Secondly, Piper says fire in the Bible symbolizes hell.

“In relation to the human body, it is a dreadful thing,” he writes. “It wounds and tortures and kills and destroys. This is the most prominent in relation to the body after death.”

“As a Christian who believes in the judgment of God after death (Hebrews 9:27) the last symbol we want to use, in connection with death, is fire!” he continues. “Hell (Gehenna) is a place of fire (Matthew 5:22, James 3:6). This fire is meant to be felt by the body.”

He cites more Scripture to support this view:

“It is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell” (Matthew 5:30)

*“Fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell”* (Matthew 10:28).

*“Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame” (Luke 16:24).*

If and when Christians are persuaded to opt for burial rather than cremation, Piper suggests planning less-expensive burials. He further states church leaders should set the tone.

“I do believe that pastors should discourage expensive funerals,” he writes. “In a Bible-saturated, counter-cultural church, made up of kingdom-minded sojourners and exiles (1 Peter 2:11), no one should be pressured into the mindset that the more expensive the coffin, the more loved the deceased.”

“Pastors should lead the way in cultivating a church ethos where expensive funerals (and weddings!) are not the norm,” he said.

Piper goes even further by recommending individual churches set-up special funds for people who can’t afford a burial.

“My proposal in this article is that Christian churches be willing to help families financially with simple Christ-exalting funerals and burials, so that no Christian is drawn to cremation because it’s cheaper,” Piper blogged.

“I’m not thinking mainly of a line-item in the budget, but of a segregated compassion-fund that that church members may give to regularly or as the need arises,” he said. {eoa}

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# Why It's Important to Learn God's Ways

God *wants* us to know His ways. I am moved to think that God cares so much about me that He wants me to know His ways.

I was flying from New York to Miami about twelve years ago when I came across a verse in my daily Bible reading. I had read this verse hundreds of times before, but for some reason it shook me rigid that day. It was when Moses was given *carte blanche* from God to ask whatever He wanted. Moses replied: "If I have found favor in Your sight, show me now Your *way*" (Ex. 33:13, emphasis added). I was convicted like I had not been convicted in years. I had to ask myself, what if God gave me *carte blanche*? What would I have asked for? I knew exactly what I had been asking for—and it wasn't what Moses wanted.

This is what shamed me. It showed me that Moses' devotion to God was so much greater and higher and deeper than mine. It showed me why Moses was the greatest of men in human history. All he wanted was to know God's ways. He could have asked for more power and authority. He could have asked for vengeance upon his stubborn following. He could have asked for any number of things—here was his chance! He wanted one thing: to know God's ways.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," said the prophet Hosea (Hos. 4:6). They lacked knowledge of two things: God's Word and His ways.

If we truly want to know God's will, the best thing we can do to achieve this is to get to know *Scripture* backward and forward. It is the blessing of the Holy Spirit we want and need. He wrote Scripture—His greatest product. The best way to get to know the Bible is to get on good terms with its Author. Devour everything He wrote!

How do we get to know God's ways? How do you get to know anybody's ways? It is by spending time with them. That is the only way to know somebody. You will never get to know *anyone* truly unless you spend time with them.

God wants you to know His Word *and* His ways. Both of these: His Word—Holy Scripture—and His ways come by spending time in His presence.

What are God's particular ways? *First, He does not want you to have any anger in your heart.* How then does one get rid of anger in the heart? I reply: by total forgiveness. This is the only way it can be done. Jesus said that we should love our enemies and pray that God will bless those who persecute us.

This brings me to my second point about God's ways: *God wants you to close the time gap between sin and repentance.* The sooner you admit you got it wrong, the better. Why? So that there will be no discontinuity of anointing.

Here's my third point about God's ways: *walk in the light that God gives you.* If you don't walk in it, but go outside of it, you will be in darkness where there is no fellowship with the Father. Walk in the light. Get rid of bitterness. Forgive.

But sometimes there is more. God may confront you with a responsibility that you know you must accept if you are going to move forward with the Lord. Confess any sin. Obey any impulse that you honestly believe could only have come from the Holy Spirit. This is a vital part of getting to know God's ways.

Fourth, *replace grumbling with gratitude.* God loves gratitude (See Philippians 4:6). He wants us to develop into being a thankful people; it is one of His ways. There's another reason to be grateful as research shows that being thankful has positive effects on your health and well-being.

Fifth, *never run ahead of God.* One of the easiest things in

the world to do is to run ahead of God. Once you realize you have run ahead of the Lord and have left Him behind, immediately start looking for Him. Don't keep going ahead.

I want to share an acrostic for L-O-V-E that I have come up with for my personal use. I literally pray every single day that I will not grieve the Holy Spirit. I try to apply this acrostic all day long—whether with the general public or at home. This works for me, although I so often fall short.

L – Let be. Accept without complaining what God allows. Let God work for you.

O – Overlook. Don't try to get even. Overlook rude, thoughtless behavior.

V – Vulnerable. Let the mind of Christ govern you. Be willing to become a Nobody.

E – Emancipate. Extend graciousness and help others “save face” when they're wrong.

I can safely promise that you will avoid grieving the Spirit if you live by these principles. It will also help you to keep from running ahead of God.

✘ *Adapted from Pigeon Religion: Holy Spirit, Is That You? by R.T. Kendall, copyright 2016, published by Charisma House. This book will help you discern when the Holy Spirit is authentically moving, or when a counterfeit spirit is producing manipulation. You will come away with a refreshed sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and a keen awareness of how to identify a counterfeit. To order your copy click [here](#).*

### **Prayer Power for the Week of May 8, 2016**

This week ask the Lord to help you live out the acrostic for L-O-V-E and teach you His way each day. Remember to forgive those who have hurt you, bless them and pray for their well-being as the Lord desires. Continue to lift up Israel and our

other allies as you pray for our military and their families. Ask the Lord to help our leaders make wise decisions, and continue to pray for revival in our nation and around the world. (Eph. 4:32; Matt. 6:14; Col. 3:13; John 13:34-35).

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## **WATCH: 3 Tips for Becoming a Good Listener for Your Son**

We all want people to listen to us. But truly listening isn't always easy.

Your son may be silently crying out for your attention. These will help you earn his trust. {eoa}

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## **22 Things Christ Followers Should Quit**

Before you read the following, I just want you to know that these are things I am guilty of, too. Like I tell my church all the time: "I'm preaching to myself!" When it comes to following Christ, we are all a work in progress.

For those who know me, you are familiar with my personality, so you will be able to decipher my tone and picture me smiling as you read this. For those of you who don't know me, try to picture me smiling as you read on. So, go ahead and laugh, love, and perhaps even whisper, "Ouch."

And just so there's no confusion, the word Christian is defined as someone who professes Christ and embraces His teachings. Not only are the four gospels about Him, the entire Bible is Him because He is the Living Word.

Here is a list of the 22 things I believe Christ followers should cease and desist in their lives:

**1. Quit expecting the world to like you.** Jesus said it would hate you (John 15:18-27, Matthew 10:22).

**2. Quit throwing your own teammates under the bus.** We're called to build each other up, not tear each other down. In fact, Jesus said that our love for each other proves to the world that we are really His true disciples (John 13:35, 1 Thessalonians 5:11).

**3. Quit gossiping.** This includes sharing "juicy prayer requests" with no intention of actually praying (Psalms 34:13, Psalms 101:5, Ephesians 4:29).

**4. Quit replacing prayer with "good vibes" and "positive thoughts."** No. Just no. Prayer moves the hand of God and the hand of God moves the world. Prayer is much more effective than making someone feel warm and fuzzy inside. By the way, I'm not saying positive thoughts and good vibes are wrong (and they do make you feel good), I'm just saying prayer trumps them both (2 Corinthians 1:11, Philippians 1:19, Ephesians 6:18, James 5:16).

**5. Quit saying repentance isn't necessary.** It is. Jesus said so. And just so you know, there are 53 references to repentance in the New Testament. Now go repent (Matthew 5:17, Acts 3:19, Romans 2:5, 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 1:9).

**6. Quit saying that the "portions of the Bible that make you feel uncomfortable" are irrelevant and nothing more than dated writings.** All 66 books, 1,189 chapters, and 31,102 verse are the inspired Word of God. So the next time you think about

throwing out the Old Testament, just remember that Jesus quoted it numerous times in all four gospels (John 1:1-4, John 1:14, 2 Timothy 3:16).

**7. Quit expecting unbelievers/non-Christians to understand the Bible and/or to live like Christ.** It's hard enough for Christians to live like Christ and it's impossible to do so without Him (until the blinders are removed) (2 Corinthians 4:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 5:24-25).

**8. Quit acting like the Great Commission (Go into all the world to preach the gospel) is the Great Suggestion.** It's a command. Go already (Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15).

**9. Quit thinking that it's OK to be silent about your faith.** Yes, it's just as important to represent Jesus by how we live, but someone can't respond to the Good News without hearing it ... and they can't hear it if no one opens their mouth (Matthew 10:27, Romans 10:14-15).

**10. Quit being more passionate about your political affiliation than your relationship with Jesus.** If 99 percent of what you post on social media consists of bashing government officials and presidential candidates—you're doing more damage than good (Romans 13:1-7, 2 Chronicles 7:14).

**11. Quit using the Bible to beat the "hell" out of people.** That doesn't work. Ever. I don't care if you're right—if you're a jerk, nobody is listening. Love wins! (No, I don't mean the book by Rob Bell.) (1 Corinthians 13).

**12. Quit your legalistic rants, knee-jerk reactions, and judgmentalism.** You're turning people off. You're making good news bad news. Jesus befriended sinners. Try it and great things will happen (Mark 2:17, Luke 5:27-32, 1 Timothy 1:15-16).

**13. Quit calling yourself a Christian if you believe there are multiple paths that lead to salvation.** Jesus said that He's

the only way to heaven. If you don't believe Him, you're not a Christ follower (John 14:6, 1 John 2:4).

**14. Quit living like everybody's going to heaven and nobody's going to hell.** Jesus died so the whole world could be saved, but He said the path to heaven is narrow and few find it. And for the record, He preached more about hell than heaven ... but He did it without using a bullhorn and manipulative scare tactics. #LeadLikeJesus (Matthew 7:13-14).

**15. Quit acting like you're better than those who don't know Jesus.** You're not (Luke 18:19, Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11-13).

**16. Quit criticizing loving believers who take a biblical stand for godly morals and Christian values (that are crystal clear in Scripture) just because you're too much of a wimp to take a stand yourself.** Jesus didn't call us to be politically correct. Develop some backbone. And yes, I said wimp. And yes, I will repent for calling you a wimp (Acts 4-6).

**17. Quit pointing out the speck in your neighbor's eye while ignoring the plank in your own eye.** By the way, I can hardly see my computer as I type this because of the log in my own eye (Matthew 7:3-5).

**18. Quit being a jerk, period.** Whatever your position is (on anything), if you can't communicate it in love, you're a clanging cymbal and your message is worthless. So yeah, I probably shouldn't have called you a wimp in No. 16 (1 Corinthians 13).

**19. Quit defending sin.** Quit hating sinners. These are equally important. Oh yeah, and lose your critical lens (Psalm 97:10, Matthew 22:37-39).

**20. Quit using the phrase "he who's without sin cast the first stone" out of context.** The next thing Jesus said was, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:1-11).

**21. Quit using grace as a license to live however you want.**

Jesus is grace, so don't trample Him under your feet (Romans 6:1-2, 1 John 2:4, Hebrews 10:26-31).

**22. Quit using the phrase** (when inviting people to church)

"come as you are" if you're going to complain when they start showing up (Mark 2:17, Luke 5:27-32). {eoa}

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