

# Men, Here's Why God Wants You as a Son

If you have a Bible, I want you to turn to Jeremiah 3:19, and then we are going to go through Jeremiah 4:4. It's the heart of God's Word towards men.

We are going to see a decision by men when it comes to sonship. We are also going to see the consequences of that choice. We are going to see that there is a chance for a second decision to be made.

In Jeremiah 3:19, God says: "I myself said how gladly I would treat you like sons."

I want to stop right there. Whether you are a believer or you're not; God wants you as a son.

"How gladly I would treat you like sons."

And then He goes on. He says what a father would say to a son.

"And give you the most beautiful land with the most beautiful inheritance of any nation. I thought you would call me Father, and not turn away from me. But like a woman, unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, oh house of Israel."

Now, what's the result of turning down God's desire for your sonship in Him?

"A cry is heard in the barren heights, the crying and weeping and pleading of the people of Israel because they have perverted their ways and have forgotten the Lord their God. Return faithless people. Oh Israel, I'll cure you from backsliding. Yes, we will come to you, for you are the Lord our God. Surely, the idolatrous, commotion on the hills and

mountains is a deception.”

You see, there was a pull away from sonship, toward false sonship, false validation, and false acceptance. They can find sonship and identity for their masculinity in God as sons, or alternatively out in their culture. When you go get it in your culture, it creates a commotion of suffering.

Verse 24 says, “From our youth, shameful gods have consumed the fruits from our fathers’ labor, their flocks and herds, their sons and daughters. Let us lie down in our shame and let our disgrace cover us. We have sinned against the Lord our God, both we and our fathers from our youth till this day we have not obeyed the Lord our God.”

Obeyed in what? Obey in just being sons? Obey the Lord just through being a passionate son?

Here’s what Jeremiah 4:1 says.

“If you will return, oh Israel, you’ll return to me,” declares the Lord. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray and if in a truthful, just and righteous way, you swear as surely as the Lord lives then the nations will be blessed by Him, and in Him. There will be glory.”

Now, I want to pause there for a second.

“You come back,” God says.

Instead of producing this blast zone of suffering, you begin to be a blessing. You can [become a blast zone of blessing](#). Blessed sons are a blessing to others!

Do you realize that God’s purpose for you is to be a passionate son and to experience His fatherly blessings? In passing those blessings to you, then through you, they are passed to the world.

When I pick up the paper, I see the curses that come from the lack of spiritual sonship: a lack of accountability, a lack of authority that's latching onto the fall of sonship out there in culture, and the suffering it creates.

I long for this moment when passionate sons, blessed by a passionate God, are blessing people passionately in the blast zones of their influence.

In Jeremiah 4:3 God says, "This is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem." Notice the target audience here. At stake are the blessings of nations.

The target audience is not woman. That's not a chauvinistic statement. That's not a macho statement. For better or for worse, man has been given the mantle of leadership in families, communities and countries. It is true today, and it was true in Israel.

In Jeremiah 4:4, this is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and Jerusalem. "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire because of the evil you have done – burn with no one to quench it."

Unmitigated, cultural adoption by cultures of men creates unmitigated suffering among people.

What is God saying? He certainly is not talking to the woman when He says in verse three: "Break up unplowed ground."

He's not messing around. Do you know how the farmer breaks up unplowed ground? Is that hard work or soft work? It is hard work. This means you've got to go after the hard issues. He is talking to an agrarian culture who understands what it means to break up the unplowed ground. It means that they don't plow the fields that are already cultivated.

What is the unplowed ground that He is talking about? He's not talking about the fields. He is talking about the spiritually unplowed ground of your heart.

Unplowed ground is unfruitful. It doesn't have crops planted so there has to be a softening. There has to be a transformation so that seed can go into the unplowed ground. He is talking about the softening of your heart, your willingness to be moldable and flexible, and to receive instruction as the son of God.

Remember the headline: "I will gladly treat you like sons." Well this is one of those conversations where God is saying: Son can I have a word with you?

"Break up the unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns." When do you sow among thorns? When one of God's men sows his masculinity and plants his identity into what culture says is a man. That's sowing among thorns.

It was a problem in Judean culture back then, and it's a problem today. Break up the unplowed ground in your life. That thing that just came to mind, start plowing it today.

Watch "[Uprising](#)," where men's expert and pastor Kenny Luck helps you to learn how God's men are joining an uprising in the Church.

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**Kenny Luck** is the president and founder of Every Man Ministries. As the former men's pastor at Saddleback Church in California and current leadership pastor at Crossline Community Church, Kenny has found the proven way to improve men's ministries around the world. [Sleeping Giant](#) is this blueprint, and gives men the tools they need to lead and understand their own men's ministry. Watch Kenny's teachings at [EveryManMinistries.com](#) and [start your men's group](#) today!

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# Praying Doctors, New Technology Lead the Fight Against Cancer

A decade ago, doctors had no idea of the technology on the horizon that would help them take on cancer. Today, Norfolk, Virginia's [Bon Secours Cancer Institute](#) is a faith-based health system that helps patients beat their cancer in a way that's light years ahead of the past.

Unfortunately, cancer is still prevalent in our society. Four out of 10 Americans will learn they have cancer sometime during their lifetime.

The good news is that diagnosis isn't what it used to be. Today's cancer treatments offer greater hope than ever before, both with increased cure rates and fewer side effects.

## Tackling Those Nasty Side Effects

Like millions of men diagnosed with prostate cancer, Dennis Jones was not only concerned about getting rid of the cancer, but also about the possible side effects of surgery, primarily incontinence and impotence.

"My name's written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I know where I'm going to spend eternity," he explained. "But my life on earth here, I want to be as productive as I possibly can."

Dr. Bradley Prestidge, a radiation oncologist at the Bon Secours Cancer Institute, said Jones and prostate cancer patients like him have every right to be mindful of the chief possible side effects he referred to as “the two ‘I’s.”

“Incontinence, if it’s a problem for you, you could be leaking urine all day, every day for the rest of your life. And that could be a much bigger problem than having problems with sexual function,” he explained.

Jones chose a procedure called Brachytherapy Seed Implants, a treatment offered at the Bon Secours Cancer Institute, and was thrilled with the results.

“I’ve been blessed to say that I haven’t experienced any of those side effects,” he said.

### **How Brachytherapy Works**

Dr. Prestidge says Brachytherapy Seed Implants occur when doctors place tiny radioactive pellets inside the prostate.

“We place needles into the prostate. The patient is asleep of course when we’re doing this,” he explained. “And then we are able to slide these tiny pellets through the needles inside of the prostate so they radiate from the inside out.”

“And we find that’s very effective because that’s where the cancer is. So we’re killing the cancer from the inside,” he said. “But also we can make it so it’s so conformal to the target so the normal tissue, the bladder, the rectum, gets very little dose and has no complications for the patient.”

Brachytherapy Seed Implant treatment only takes a couple of hours, according to Dr. William Rawls, a urologist at the Bon Secours Cancer Institute, who says most patients only need one treatment.

“I really see the advantage of Brachytherapy in the one-and-done principle and just get all the radiation in at once, put

up with some side effects for a brief period of time, and then the treatment is done," he explained.

"And all we do is we observe to make sure that the treatment worked and it is amazing to see the results," he said.

Patients who opt for Brachytherapy usually enjoy the same results as people who choose surgery for their prostate cancer. Often that includes reduced PSA numbers. PSA is a blood test, where higher numbers indicate greater prostate cancer risk.

Dennis Jones said he is pleased at his PSA numbers after his seed implant procedure.

"Well my numbers were at one point 16, 13 to 16 or more," he recalled. "And today it was 0.02. Those are good numbers by the way. Those are very good numbers. I'm very excited about that, and I thank God for leading me to the right physicians."

### **The Power of Praying Doctors**

Those doctors regularly thank God, too. Bon Secours is the only faith-based health system in Virginia, according to Scott Hurley, vice president of Bon Secours Hampton Roads Foundations.

"We take care of are people who really can't afford to pay," he explained. "And so we really see this as a mission where we're reaching out and taking care of those people because it really is a ministry trying to bring healing to both the spiritual and body. People pray for patients, really care about the patients."

Part of that care is pursuing technology that protects the body from aggressive treatment. While seed implants radiate from inside, what's known as "True Beam" works from the outside-in. With the latest radiation techniques, the key is precision. New tools better isolate the tumor, thereby

protecting the healthy tissue surrounding it. That means higher doses of radiation can be used.

Computer software helps True Beam hit the tumor from every angle, constantly adjusting to its shape.

When Annie Heichel learned she had breast cancer, she assumed the worst.

“My emotions were, I was going to go without two breasts real fast,” she said. “I was going to have to accept the fact that at my age I wasn’t going to need them anymore.”

Happily, she was wrong. Breast cancer treatment isn’t what it once was, according to Dr. Charles Ives, a breast surgeon at Bon Secours Cancer Institute.

“Nowadays the majority of patients don’t need a mastectomy,” he said. “They can have lesser surgery, a lumpectomy, or what we call a partial mastectomy, which then involves radiation therapy which helps minimize the recurrence.”

“The long term results of a partial mastectomy or lumpectomy are just as good as a mastectomy,” he said.

### **A Promising New Procedure**

When Dr. Ives removes a tumor, he puts a small object called a Biozorb where the tumor was. It’s a relatively new procedure.

“There are a lot of surgeons that don’t know about it yet,” he said. “A lot of patients I think that don’t know about it.”

In X-rays, the Biozorb helps pinpoint the tumor’s location so doctors know exactly where to radiate.

Ives says another benefit of the Biozorb is it’s ability to make breasts look normal, post-surgery.

“You’re taking a portion of the breast out. You’re leaving an empty space. And that can distort the breast,” he explained.

“But this device is a three-dimensional device, and so you’re putting it right where the tumor was, and that provides some scaffolding or buttress to the breast to decrease the amount of deformity that you might be causing.”

Heichel said people who, like her, think breast cancer treatment is the same today as it was in years past, will be pleasantly surprised.

“Everything they have out there for you , especially this Biozorb,” she said. “You can go in, have surgery in the morning, come home in the afternoon, and go to work the next day. It’s just that simple.”

So while a cancer diagnosis can be traumatic, new treatments can often lead to better cure rates than before, with fewer complications.

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

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## **Are You Ignoring These Signs of Vitamin Deficiency?**

Vitamin deficiencies create an imbalance within the body. Eating large amounts of processed foods is one role player in these deficiencies. Oftentimes, many do not consume enough of the proper foods to provide the body with what it needs.

Impairments, or challenges functioning properly, are often the result of vitamin deficiency. Over time, it is possible for certain diseases to develop within the body if changes are not made. Understanding the signs of vitamin deficiency becomes important when working to maintain excellent health.

## **Six Strange Signs You Don't Want to Miss**

**1. Cracks in the corners of your mouth.** *Type of vitamin deficiency:* Cracks in the corners of your mouth along with redness can be a sign of a deficiency in the B vitamins and zinc. Iron deficiency is also a possibility. Individuals who diet to lose weight can lack these vitamins more, especially those who are following a vegetarian diet.

*Add these foods:* In order to overcome the deficiency and place the body back into balance, add proteins back into the diet. For vegetarians, this will be "plant" proteins. For other individuals, this can include foods such as tuna, salmon, lentils, eggs, and poultry.

*Enhancing absorption:* The body absorbs iron more readily when the individual adds vitamin C. When eating a meal rich in iron, add foods which are full of vitamin C such as broccoli, kale, oranges, guavas, peas, or papaya.

**2. Muscle cramps and ongoing pain in the lower extremities.** *Type of vitamin deficiency:* Muscle cramps in the feet and legs are often a sign of a vitamin deficiency. The body lacking in sufficient amounts of potassium, magnesium, and calcium can display such signs. Individuals who work outdoors in warmer weather are more susceptible to this type of deficiency.

*Add these foods:* Adding foods which are rich in these vitamins will often help keep muscle cramps away. They will also help the body to function in the way it was created to function. Foods which help to add these three vitamins include bananas, almonds, grapefruit, squash, apples, spinach, and kale.

*Quick Tip:* Athletes typically suffer from muscle cramps due to heavy perspiration. Competitors will often drink pickle juice before they exercise on a regular basis. Drinking a few ounces of the juice can relieve cramps within two minutes.

**3. Feelings of numbness and tingling.** *Type of vitamin*

*deficiency:* When the body exhibits feelings of numbness and tingling, this can be another sign of deficiency in the B vitamins. Additional signs of this deficiency also include bouts of depression, continued fatigue, and hormone imbalances.

*Add these foods:* Adding organic proteins is a great way to prevent deficiencies of B vitamins. Pinto and black beans are one option along with adding eggs, asparagus, and clams. Adding a healthy multivitamin is also a great preventative.

**4. White bumps, red bumps.** *Type of vitamin deficiency:* White bumps, or red bumps, are often a sign of a vitamin D deficiency. It can also be a sign of the body lacking in vitamin A or important fatty acids.

*Add these foods:* Adding a variety of healthy nuts to the diet is essential along with including a variety of dark leafy veggies. The bright colored vegetables are also a great addition to the diet.

*Recommendation:* Vitamin D supplements are commonly used and should be of a high-quality brand. The recommended dosage is usually 2000 IU daily.

**5. Hair loss and red rash on cheeks.** *Type of vitamin deficiency:* Hair loss and signs of a rough rash on the cheeks can be a sign of a vitamin B deficiency. Biotin is not stored by the body, so it must regularly be replenished. Biotin is also known to many as the “hair” vitamin.

*Add these foods:* In order to give the body a good supply of biotin, add nuts, soybeans, salmon, avocados, and bananas to the diet.

*Recommendation:* Adding biotin to the diet through supplementation is an option. The daily recommended dosage is usually around 2.5 mg if dietary nutrition is lacking.

**6. Fingernails with Beau's lines.** *Type of vitamin deficiency:* Depression lines on the fingernails are often a sign of malnutrition, especially those which run "horizontally." The lines can be a result of B vitamin deficiencies, calcium deficiencies, or zinc deficiencies. Also, a lack of vitamin C may contribute to Beau's lines.

*Add these foods:* Eating a diet with sufficient protein is important along with a good supply of healthy vitamins with minerals. Adding organic whole grains to the diet can be helpful along with a variety of fruits/veggies.

*Quick Tip:* Adding a high-quality supplement is important in helping the body to stay balanced and function properly. With adequate changes in the diet, signs of deficiency should go away. If there are further concerns, please see your family physician.

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

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## **5 Ways Your Pornography Use**

# Affects Your Wife

I wonder what he was thinking on the ride home that night. Earlier in the day, he received a call from his wife.

She was doing some work on the computer and found a bunch of porn sites in the Internet history. "Have you been looking at porn?" she said as her voice cracked. His silence said it all. As she started to cry, she hung up the phone. He tried calling her back, but she texted him saying she was too upset to talk and that they would talk about when he got home.

That was a story a friend told me about a coworker of his many years ago. I remember being glad I wasn't him but also not understanding at the time why she was so crushed. As I have talked to women and read many stories similar to the one above, I have come to realize why it is so hurtful. If we think through and know the end results of our decisions, we tend to make better ones. I'm not intending to make anyone feel guilty, but the effects of pornography watching on our wives are clear. Here's how your porn use affects your wife.

**1. It makes her feel insecure.** She immediately thinks something is wrong with her. Women spend a lot of time beating themselves up and obsessing about their faults. A husband's porn use validates all of the negative things his wife thinks about herself. If she only looked different, lost weight, was blonde, sexy, wore better clothes, or fit into the right size are all things that flood her brain, and more importantly, her heart. Ultimately, she feels like she is not enough.

**2. It makes her feel betrayed.** The majority of porn use in a marriage is kept hidden from each other. Even in the small number of cases where the wife says she's OK with it if they watch together ends with the husband alone in a room somewhere in secret. When a husband and wife hide things (other than surprises), it's living a lie. [It's a betrayal](#). Personally, I

believe and I know there are plenty who will take exception to this—that it is a form of cheating.

Is it as bad or does it involve the depth of pain and fallout as a physical or emotional affair with an actual person? No. But a husband's sexual connection is something reserved for his wife. When engaged in porn, he replaces his wife and connects sexually with something else. If a physical affair is the end of the road, this is certainly the beginning. There may be a considerable difference between the two, but it is still highway betrayal. It's a road to avoid at all costs.

**3. It makes her feel suspicious.** Lies, secrecy, and wandering sexual pursuits is a violation of trust. Once trust is broken, it can be rebuilt, but it is difficult. She will always fight an internal battle of taking his word or not. Her mind will work overtime on what other secrets there could possibly be. She may even question how well she knows her husband.

**4. It makes her feel like a failure as a wife.** In her head, she will feel as though she failed her husband sexually. It is obvious to her that if her husband did not have unfulfilled desires, he would not have turned to porn. Everyone is selfish to some degree, and plenty of women are all about themselves. However, I think most women strive to be wonderful wives and compare themselves to the next person fearing that they fall short. A husband's porn use will confirm a wife's fear in her head and heart.

**5. It makes her feel like a fool.** She thought she knew her husband, that they shared everything. Meanwhile, there has been a lot she didn't know. Right or wrong, her husband isn't the man she thought nor is her marriage. She'll question why she didn't know and, again, if she really knows her husband at all. {eoa}

**BJ Foster** is the content manager for All Pro Dad and a married father of two. For the original article, visit [allprodad.com](http://allprodad.com).

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# Why When You Set Something at God's Feet You Should Leave It There

Are you a do-it-yourself type of person? Do you subscribe to the old adage, "If you want something done right, do it yourself?"

Charles-Guillaume Étienne, a French dramatist, penned the phrase, in French, in his 1824 work *Bruis et Palaprat*. The literal translation is "One is never served so well as by oneself."

While it is not my intention to cast aspersions on or to judge Étienne, I could find no evidence in researching him of a connection to Christianity. But "one is never served so well as by oneself" is certainly a tell-tale phrase. It indicates a deficiency of trust in anyone beside himself—including God.

Joyce Meyer says she wasted many years "being upset about things I couldn't do anything about." When people hurt her, she found it difficult to trust anyone except herself.

"This caused me to believe, 'If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself,'" she once wrote. "If you don't ask anybody for anything or open your heart to them, they can't hurt you. But this mindset just kept me from trusting God. It was a bad habit I had to break."

Haven't we all been guilty of that at one time or another? I certainly have, without question.

Think about that. I actually had the audacity to think, for

even one second, that the King of Kings, Lord of Lords and the Creator of the universe could not solve my simple little life issues.

Much to my chagrin, I soon discovered that I couldn't either. Imagine that.

It's a lesson that both my wife, Patty, and I have soberly learned during the 18-plus years of our marriage. Sure, we would pray to God, and we would set our problems at His feet. We brought our prayers to Him, fully expecting a favorable answer, believing the words of 1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, He hears us" (MEV).

The problem was, in many instances, we were too impatient to wait on God's timing. And when the results didn't come when we wanted them, we would begin to complain and whine, effectively snatching our problems from God's feet and not allowing Him to take care of them. This specifically happened early in our marriage when we were trying to have children.

While you can read the specific details of that ordeal in [this article](#) from 2013, needless to say, the reason why our fertility problems stretched out over three-plus years—including a miscarriage—is because we didn't leave it at God's feet. We picked it up and felt we could take care of it better than God could.

But there simply must come a time of surrender, a time where you finally realize that God is the ONLY solution. We were exhausted and couldn't fight it anymore, and we decided to give it ALL to God and trust Him.

Two months later, Patty became pregnant, and God gave us our daughter, Rachel. He later gave us our son, Joshua. Indeed, God is good, but He waited for us to mature in our faith before He answered our prayer.

While God is faithful and constantly answers our prayers in the little things, I can recall two other instances involving what we believed were mountainous life issues. One arose when we first moved to Florida, and I was unemployed. While I did freelance work for little money, I remained unemployed for my first two years here.

I had interviews—two which I thought I had nailed and was sure the jobs were mine. Both times, the door closed in my face. Throughout the process I prayed, and I laid the problem at God's feet, only to complain and continually pick it up again. Believe me, God will NOT honor that. It's a slap to His face.

Finally, after another major disappointment, we gave it to God and let Him keep it. A month later, I was employed again, by International Speedway Corporation in Daytona.

The second instance is more recent. We were hit with a huge payment to the IRS, one we certainly couldn't afford (more than \$7,000). This time, we immediately gave our situation to God and asked Him to handle it without complaint. We remained in prayer, and God found a more manageable way for us. Indeed, God is good.

In each instance, I felt like King Jehohaphat and all of Judah when faced with a daunting impending battle against the Moabites and the Ammonites in 2 Chronicles 20:17, "It will not be *necessary* for you to fight in this *conflict*. Take your positions, stand, and observe the deliverance of the Lord for you, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be filled with terror. Tomorrow, go out before them, and the Lord will be with you" (MEV).

What God tells Jehoshaphat in this passage and what he would remind us of today is this: "The battle is not yours; it's Mine. You don't have to fight in it."

Rick Warren once wrote, "The fact is, if you are God's child, then your problems are His problems. And He is much better at

fighting your battles and solving your problems than you will ever be. Your job is to trust Him to work it all out. Perhaps the reason we have so many tired, fatigued and discouraged Christians is because we think, 'It all depends on me.'

In other words, if you're a Christ follower and you're tired because your problems seem so overwhelming, go to God's Word, and you'll certainly find your answers, including these two Scriptures:

- "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6, MEV)
- "Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7, MEV)

If you find yourself in similar situations, know that God doesn't want you to take those burdens on yourself. He wants to help. Patty and I know we will continue to be presented with life challenges with our marriage, our children, our finances, our home and other areas. But we now know what to do about it; and you can do the same.

Go to His Word; go to Him in prayer and leave it at His feet. Only don't take it back upon yourself. Put your trust COMPLETELY in Him and wait on Him. You will learn, as Patty and I have, to do it for the rest of your life. Remember:

- *"Those that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength"* (Isa. 40:31, MEV).
- *"But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience"* (Rom. 8:25, MEV).

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

*Step Out of the Boat is a ministry created by Charisma Media Online Managing Editor Shawn A. Akers and dedicated to helping Christ followers strengthen their faith to get beyond their comfort zone and come to more intimate relationship with*

*Jesus. With its articles, podcasts and other forms of media, Step Out of the Boat encourages Christ followers to daily reach to a higher level in their calling.*

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## **6 Eye-Opening Stats About Parenting and Smartphones**

Let's be real: It's no easy task to be a focused, patient, intentional parent in our fast-paced, task-driven, digitally saturated culture.

### **We Feel the Pressure**

We feel pressured to be available in remote places during the most sacred times. We often have multiple requests coming at us with flashing lights and intrusive dings.

We live in a world that wants to know how much we accomplished—a world where daily achievements are publicly broadcast—a world that values instantaneous electronic responses over face-to-face connection.

It's challenging to live a distraction-free life as a [parent](#) when the world is constantly tapping us on the shoulder with another message to answer or task to complete. But how much I achieved and how fast I responded isn't what I want my family to remember about me when I'm gone.

Earlier this year, I stumbled upon a few eye-opening statistics.

### **6 Eye-Opening Stats**

- 65 percent of parents, ages 25-34, believe they check

- their phone too much (56 percent of kids agree).
- 31 percent of parents say they don't set a good example with mobile device usage (22 percent of kids agree).
  - 45 percent of parents get distracted while having a conversation with their kids (39 percent of kids agree).
  - 47 percent of kids say they would confiscate a parent's mobile device if they could.
  - 53 percent of parents believe they check their phone too much (65 percent within the 25-34 age group).
  - 47 percent of parents believe their children spend more time on their mobile device than with them.

*Source: AVG Technologies Digital Diaries Research, June 2015.*

## **Is This You?**

Do these statistics describe you? If so, don't fret. That was me too.

What may be more shocking is the percentage of kids who agree with the statement. For me, it's more than just being distracted. It affects my children too. I think of it like this:

- If I want my kids to be awed by sunsets in the future, I must take time to be awed by sights in nature now.
- If I want my children to appreciate the joy of a screen-free Saturday afternoon in the future, I must take time to show them the joys of a screen-free Saturday now.
- If I want my children to value experiences rather than things, I must celebrate a run through the sprinkler, good conversation and crickets that lull us to sleep.
- If I want my children to experience the freedom that comes from open blue skies, green grass between my toes and crunchy leaves underfoot, I must partake in such freedoms myself.
- If I want my children to look into the eyes of those who speak to them, I must look into their eyes and listen to

their words.

## **A Hands-Free Vow for Today**

By modeling how to live life with open hands and attentive eyes, there is a very good chance my children will remember me as an active participant in their lives. So I started with a simple vow each day.

*“Today, I want you to remember my listening face—not my fake listening face, the one that nods robotically and looks right through you. Today, I want to love you by listening, really listening. Today, I want you to remember my open hands—not my multi-tasking hands, the ones too full, too busy, too pushy to gently tuck your hair behind your ear. Today, I want to love you by opening my two free hands. Today, I want you to remember my loving voice—not my impatient, exasperated, not-right-now voice. Today, I want to love you by speaking kindly. Today, I want you to remember my present self—not my moving-target self, the one darting frantically from point A to point B, too hurried to let you set the pace. Today, I want to love you by slowing down.”*

## **Put on a Listening Face**

Out of all the behaviors listed in the vow, the most important one to me is the listening face.

My dad gave me the gift of the listening face throughout my childhood and tumultuous teen years. Looking back now, I’m quite certain it saved my life. The fact that my dad valued what I had to say—no matter how unimportant or trivial—gave me the confidence to speak up even in the most intimidating and dangerous situations. It gave me the ability to speak up for my beliefs, for my dreams and for those who couldn’t speak up for themselves. My dad’s listening face gave me a voice.

When my children were born, I aspired to give them the same soul-building gift. I found great hope in the fact that even

at the height of my overwhelmed life, I still managed to offer the listening face to my children. It was the one thing I knew I could do well, even if I was failing at everything else.

Today, I continue to make every effort to hear my children's words. I know firsthand how important this offering is to the emotional well-being of a child, no matter the age.

### **Maybe, Just Maybe ...**

Someday, I hope my children will remember the way I made eye contact, the nodding of my head and my thoughtful responses.

Maybe, just maybe, the results of these daily gestures of love and presence will be evident sooner than expected. Maybe, just maybe, I won't have to wait until my dying breath to see these loving actions have made a difference.

Maybe, just maybe, these daily gestures will make up how I'm someday remembered, but more importantly, who I am. Maybe, just maybe, these offerings will live in the heart, soul and facial expressions of those I love dearly.

And maybe, just maybe, their lives will be better for it.

*Article courtesy of HomeLife magazine. For the original article, visit [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com).*

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## **Bring a Friend: A 10-Minute Workout for 2**

A few weeks ago, I [wrote an article](#) that featured a 10-minute total-body workout that you can do anytime, anywhere. This week, I wanted to give you a routine that is still efficient,

quick and convenient—no fancy equipment or gym membership required!—but is designed specifically for *two*.

Whether it's with a friend, family member or significant other, I think we can all agree that exercise is more fun when done with others. Not only that, but we often push ourselves harder when we're sweating alongside someone else and are less likely to skip warmups, skimp on stretching or snip the workout short.

As I like to mention every time I program a workout, be sure to dedicate at least five minutes to stretching at the end of your session, focusing on the muscles most emphasized that day, as well as any areas that feel particularly tight or sore.

Stretching improves circulation, increases flexibility, helps maximize the range of motion in your joints and reduces soreness and stress! Each stretch should be held between 15 and 30 seconds and should feel good. If it becomes painful, ease up a bit, breathe deep and go slower.

Also essential to any workout, whether wrestling, weightlifting or water aerobics, is a proper warmup.

### **Why Warm Up?**

Because warming up properly is full of benefits, including:

- Elevation of body temperature
- Increase blood flow in the muscles
- Improves efficient cooling
- Improves range of motion
- Reduces incidence and likelihood of musculoskeletal injuries
- Supplies adequate blood flow to heart
- Provides rehearsal of movements performed in the workout
- Mental preparation

Warming prepares us for an effective and rewarding workout. When the workout (the fun part!) begins, our blood is flowing hot, our hearts are pumping strong, and our minds are thinking fast, each part of us giving 100 percent to the exercises at hand.

Below, you will find a thorough warmup, followed by a 10-minute workout that will only require a pair of dumbbells (perhaps two pairs if you and your partner are on different fitness levels). The workout targets the entire body in a high-intensity format, strengthening your muscles while conditioning your cardiovascular system and burning fat—win, win, win!

## Warmup

Two rounds:

- 20 Lunges With Twist Over Lunging Knee
- 15 Slow Air Squats (lower for 5 seconds, then explode up)
- 20 Jumping Jacks
- 30 Arm Circles Each Direction
- 5 Burpees

## Workout

Set a timer for 10 minutes and repeat the circuit below as many times as possible. Divide the reps up however you wish, but only one partner can work at a time. For example, in the first exercise (Air Squats), Partner 1 may do six repetitions while Partner 2 rests. Then Partner 2 may jump in and complete the last six reps for a total of 12.

- 12 Air Squats
- 8 Dumbbell Thrusters
- 10 Partner Burpees
- 12 Dumbbell Rows

## **Exercise Instructions, in order listed:**

### **Lunge With Twist Over Lunging Knee:**

- a. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, torso upright with arms hanging straight at your sides.
- b. 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.
- c. In the lunge position, bend your elbows at 90 degrees and rotate your torso in the direction of your bent knee.

### **Air Squat**

- a. 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.
- b. Keep your chest up, shoulders back, head up. This helps promote a nice, safe, intact lumbar curve.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.

### **Jumping Jack**

- a. Begin by standing feet together with arms at your sides.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.

### **Arm Circles**

- a. Stand in a neutral position with feet hip-width apart. Your arms should be straight out to the sides so your body forms a "T."
- b. Begin making slow circles in a forward motion with your arms, then gradually make larger ones and complete the given number of repetitions.
- c. Repeat in the opposite direction.

### **Burpee**

- a. Lower your body down using proper squat form. Place hands on the ground in front of you.
- b. Jump your feet back to a plank position, then quickly lower your chest to the ground.
- c. Push yourself back up to a plank position and jump your

feet back in toward your hands.

d. Jump back up and simultaneously clap your hands behind your head. Stand up all the way, extending the hips fully before beginning your next rep.

*NOTE: To modify this exercise, you may eliminate the push-up component. To further modify for beginners, you may also walk your feet out and back in instead of jumping them out and in.*

### **Dumbbell Thruster**

a. Hold a pair of dumbbells in front of your shoulders with bent elbows. Feet should be in your squat stance (see the description for “Air Squats” above).

b. Initiate the squat by pushing your hips back, then bend your knees as you lower yourself down as in a normal squat. Make sure your torso remains upright. Do not allow the dumbbells to pull you forward.

c. As you return to a standing position, explosively press the dumbbells overhead. Make sure your biceps are by your ears in the overhead position and that your legs are straight.

d. Lower the dumbbells to your shoulders and repeat for the given number of repetitions.

### **Partner Burpee**

- Partner One stands with arms raised overhead.
- Partner Two performs a burpee and “high fives” both of Partner One’s hands as both partners do the jump portion of the burpee.

### **Bent-Over Dumbbell Row**

- Stand with knees bent and your torso at a 60-degree angle.
- With the weights fully extended straight down in your

hands, bring them straight up to your chest, contracting your shoulder blades fully.

- Slowly return to the starting position. {eoa}

**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 [dianaandersontyler.com](http://dianaandersontyler.com) and she is the owner and a coach at [CrossFit 925](#).

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## 9 Things I Will Teach My Son About God

As a Christ follower, you most likely will do everything you can to raise your child in the ways of the Lord. Still, your children are always going to have questions.

That's why I want to share with you these nine things that I will teach my son about God:

**1. It's OK to have doubts.** Growing up I was always indirectly taught by others to never question God's ways, nor should I doubt His existence or all-mighty power. But the older I became, the more questions I had about God. It was as if doubting was sought as complete disbelief, which in my case was not true at all.

The act of doubting is part of our human nature and an indirect connection with the fall of man. Doubt has been embedded into our inner-being as humans. It's a natural state. My doubts actually kickstarted my campaign towards becoming

closer to God. A lot of things didn't seem to make sense to me, and my doubts are what led me to begin studying more. Studying God's Word more brought me closer to Him, and being closer to Him gave me peace and understanding about who He was.

I want to teach my son that it's OK to doubt God, have questions and not completely understand everything God does. God is big enough to handle our doubts, our questions, and our concerns. He's not afraid of them. He wouldn't be God if that was so. I don't want my son to be afraid to question what's happening or wave his fist a little. God can handle it. I want to teach my son to let it all out and get honest with God about what he's really feeling. Why? Because I trust God to combat his doubts with pure and vibrant understanding.

**2. God's ways are not ours.** If God answered all of our prayers the way that we saw fit, our world would be one scary place to live in. Just like any loving parent in this world, God seeks what is best for his children and will constantly contradict our expectations for our own benefit. He knows what's best and His ways will always be grander than our own. I want my son to learn that we must let go of our plans and instead grab hold of the will of God. I know this concept is easier said than done, but it will always be worth it in the long run.

God's plans are perfect because God himself is a perfect Lord. He himself is the almighty assurance of life, guiding us towards the greater good of life – His will. Although God is faithful in His answering of prayer, we cannot expect him to answer every prayer to our exact measurements. Faith is trusting God even when things don't make sense, and that includes a prayer that we feel may be unanswered or at the wrong time. I want my son to understand that God works in His perfect timing and not ours.

**3. There will be people who disagree with you.** Lord willing,

my son will choose a personal relationship with God and not everyone is going to understand why he chose it. There are people in this world who will disagree with his decision to follow Jesus, and there are even people in this world who are killed because of this controversial faith. But although we may find opposition, I want my son to remember that God will always be by our side to provide us with comfort and peace.

Temporary acceptance from the world will never be able to outweigh the importance of eternal acceptance from God. Although he may be mocked and ridiculed, he can stand tall knowing God's love is on his side regardless of the opposition that faces him. His destiny is in the hands God, not the opinions of man.

**4. God is perfect, but His followers are not.** Growing up I had a lot of resentment towards God, but what I failed to realize is that my resentment was due to the actions of some of His followers, not Him. Not everyone who claims to love God is perfect, but we can always rely on God for perfection inside and out. We're human. We make mistakes. We aren't always going to do things right. I want my son to learn how to separate his frustration towards Christians from that of God, understanding that He doesn't always have perfect followers.

I want my son to understand the difference between God, the perfect creator, and His creation, the imperfect who have a great need for a perfect savior.

**5. You're always welcome home.** No matter how lost you and I may get in this life, God has an open door policy that always provides us with an opportunity to come back home. God's love always has a vacancy. We've all made mistakes, but the beauty of the cross is that Jesus died for them. All of them. Your sins have been wiped clean, and your heart has been renewed by the grace of Jesus himself. Your mistakes do not define you. Your failures don't have to haunt you. Your mishaps don't need to be accounted for. God forgives you for your mistakes, even

if you have yet to forgive yourself. I want my son to know that he is always welcome back into the arms of God, no matter how dark his life ever becomes.

**6. Church is people, not a building.** I want to teach my son to rethink the way culture has defined the definition of church, as it is not simply just a building that one attends on a weekly basis but instead who one is on a daily basis. I want my son to take ownership of his faith and be a living example of Christ. We are the church, and we are called to reflect the image of Jesus in our everyday lives.

When we take this reality to heart, every aspect of our lives then becomes a mission field, a space to worship in, and a realm to shine our light in. The world is our canvas and the Holy Spirit wants to use us to create a masterpiece known as *The Great Commission*. I want my son to see the church as more than just what cultural Christianity views it as. I want him to see the beauty of God's church being practiced through everyday people like himself.

**7. Theology matters because God matters.** I desire for my son to understand the importance of theology, his comprehension of God, and knowing why he believes what he believes. Yearning to know more about God will come naturally as he grows deeper in relation with Him. Taking the time to study God's Word through a theological mindset will help open his heart and soul to a much deeper appreciation of his being.

Theology alone will not suffice, and nor will passion by itself. I want my son to see the seriousness of learning more about the God that I pray he chooses to call, Lord. Theology matters because God matters.

**8. Life isn't always going to be easy.** The Christian life isn't always going to be easy or without trial, but God's promises us He will be alongside us the entire way. So many people think that just because they believe in Jesus means

everything is going to be flawless and perfect. This really isn't the case at all. You may have a relationship with Jesus, but this doesn't mean life is going to stop moving forward, tough circumstances are going to cease to exist, or rough times will never be a possibility.

Even though Jesus never said life would be easy, He did say He would be there for you in your times of need. The message of the Gospel isn't that life will be perfect, but that in its imperfection we have a perfect and flawless Savior.

**9. Not everything has a black and white answer.** When putting our lives in the hands of God, we must be ready to not understand everything that God does, why He does it, and how long He will do it for. Some things only have one answer: to trust God even if it doesn't make sense. It may seem like a shallow and cliché response, but it's actually quite the opposite. Trusting God amid our confusion is a spiritually deepening experience.

God won't always give us clear and crisp directions. I want my son to trust in God for that which he cannot see or comprehend with his own mind. I want my son to use God as his compass in life, directing him every step of the way.

**Jarrid Wilson** is a husband to Juli, dad to Finch, pastor, author, blogger, founder of Cause Roast. He's helping people live a better story. For the original article, visit [jarridwilson.com](http://jarridwilson.com).

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# 5 of the Most Challenging Things About Fatherhood

Before fatherhood, I would have told you that I was easy going, patient, and had incredible emotional control. I may have even believed I was good under pressure.

All of those delusions are gone now. The stress and difficulty of fatherhood have brought the truth of me to the surface like nothing else ever could.

In my first year of fatherhood, I was feeling the heat at work, in addition to a shrinking bank account, a messy house, and constantly feeling like I had no idea what I was doing. Late one night I was completely stressed out and went for a drive to get some alone time. I pulled up to a red light of an abandoned intersection and sat there quietly for a moment. All of the stress exploded out and I started yelling and screaming for a full minute.

As I sat there breathing heavy after my tirade, I noticed something in my peripheral vision. So I turned my head slowly to my right to see four wide-eyed high school girls in the car next to me staring with their mouths open. I nodded casually, turned forward, and drove off.

People may have told you parenthood is difficult, but you can never really know until it hits you in the face. However, knowing the things that push our buttons gives us a better chance of managing the stress and growing as a person.

Here are some of the most stressful things about fatherhood, and more importantly, how to deal with stress as a dad:

**1. Marriage** – Transitioning from husband and wife to dad and mom is a foundational shift. It takes a new rhythm, set of priorities, and way of relating. Marriages become easily

strained in feelings of neglect and conflicting parenting styles. If we have baggage from how we were raised or from hidden distrust, this is when it tends to come out. As a newly married couple, it's easy to keep things like that buried or denied. When kids enter the picture, our patience with a spouse's faults wears thin causing both to be at odds. In marriage, you need to assume good intention, constantly communicate, listen and pursue understanding, as well as love and cherish your spouse. After becoming parents, this is even more important.

**2. Finances** – When I was single, my cousin who had two teenagers at the time told me that if I had kids I needed to be ready for the cost. Nothing stresses me out more than the financial burden of a family. Don't get me wrong, they are more than worth every penny spent and every feeling of anxiety. But the expenses seem never ending. The times where I am most stressed is when we don't have a [prepared budget](#) or an agreed upon plan.

Knowing what you are working towards is the best place to start. Our friends at [brightpeak financial](#) can also provide professional guidance to help you build a family financial plan.

**3. High demand** – Never in our lives has so much been demanded of us. Our time, energy, and resources are constantly given to family and work. It's exhausting and can be overwhelming. It's important to remember the big picture. When I ran a marathon, there were grueling hills that required all of my energy. Running those sections was tough but it grew my muscles, enabling me to run farther. This season of high demand will eventually come to an end or, at least, ease up. I believe in the end it will strengthen our character and, depending on how we manage it, will lead to a wonderful legacy for our children.

**4. No control.** Anything can happen when you have kids.

Literally, anything. I do much better when I know what's coming and how I'm going to handle it. [Kids are unpredictable.](#) I can nurture, mold, and discipline my kids, but I can't control their decisions or behavior. I catch myself living in fear of how I will be perceived by what my kids do. I live in fear of being confronted with situations as a parent where I have no idea what to do or say. Our wise marriage counselor told us when we were expecting our first; when your baby is born, start letting go. I realize now that I need to let go of more than just my kids. I need to let go of my fears and the need to control.

**5. Sibling fighting.** As much as I anticipate my kids fighting with one another, it still makes my stomach churn. When relationships are not right, I lack peace. Unfortunately, my first response comes from my boiling stress and I send them to room jail while roaring like a lion. My wife is much better at seizing the opportunity to teach them how to reconcile and love each other. My response brings a false sense of peace. My wife's brings real peace. I'm still working on improving on this one.

**BJ Foster** is the Content Manager for All Pro Dad and a married father of two. For the original article, visit [allprodad.com](http://allprodad.com).

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## **Spiritual Warfare: 'Life Is a Battleground, Not a Playground'**

Pastor Shane Idleman says people will know us by our fruit. If we are preaching Christ to someone, it will soon be evident if we are living what we are preaching.

“When I stand up and start to preach something and the Spirit of God is quenched and grieved, everyone in the room will know it,” Idleman says. “It will be like bricks falling out of my mouth because I stand up here as a hypocrite, and everyone knows it.”

In this inspiring video devotional, Idleman implores us as Christ followers to “bring everything thought into captivity into the obedience of Christ” and not let our “flesh lead by default.” {eoa}