

When You Come, Everything Else Must Go

When God calls a man or a woman “to” something, it is inevitable that He also calls them “away” from other things. The call “to” love God is a call “away” from the compromise of the world, away from sin, away from emotional earthquakes and away from valuing a materialistic life.

When God calls a man or a woman specifically “to” ministry, the call “away” from everything else is enormous indeed.

The call “to” ministry embraces a tandem call “away” from leisurely living, “away” from a me-first mentality, “away” from business as usual and “away” from the cares of this world. A life that has been fully laid on the glorious altar of serving God is a life that is no longer aware of self-demands and a humanistic approach to life.

The call “to” God is also a call “toward” the fruits of the Spirit, toward godly living, toward embracing a missions mindset and toward treasuring the wisdom of the Word of God. The call “to” living for Christ is a call that embraces more joy and greater fulfillment than one can imagine in the exchange.

Responding to the voice of God and then walking toward all that He is and all that He has is such a tremendous call of eternal significance that what one might be required to walk away from is a small sacrifice indeed.

Who needs earth-bound living when the promise of eternity is thrown into the deal?

Who needs self-gratification when the joy of serving others is part and parcel of the bargain?

Who needs *anything else* when a man or a woman knows the complete fulfillment of simply knowing Christ?!

The call “to” the riches of Christ and “away” from the deceit of the world is the most remarkable exchange in all of eternity past or yet to come! He bids us come to Him, and, as we walk toward all that He is, the things of the earth truly do grow strangely dim, don’t they?!

Oh ... from time to time ... that great liar will flirtatiously call us by name ... but a child of God quickly recognizes his conniving ways and the voice of trickery that belongs to only to his sordid little self. When the pitiful and despotic enemy of love and forgiveness endeavors to deceive a sanctified man or woman to play poker with him, the Host of heavenly angels rises to their feet in one great and eternal roar! The voice of the delinquent is drowned out once again. He has no power ... no authority ... no platform ... only subterfuge.

As you respond to the call to come to Jesus and all that He is—as you say a resounding, “Yes!” to join with the Christ of Calvary in loving a world bound by sin—as you cry out for the power of the Holy Spirit to flood your humanity, don’t look back!

Satan will endeavor to charm you into window-shopping with him along the materialistic avenues of culture and compromise. This defeated enemy will beguilingly place his arm around your shoulder and whisper sweet nothings into your ear in an attempt to convince you to spend more than you can afford on genuine junk. Believe me, you don’t want to enter into that type of indebtedness.

When you “come,” everything else must “go.” But there is no sorrow in the exchange; there is only the joy of knowing that if Christ is for me than who can be against me.

“You have affirmed today that the Lord is your God and vowed

to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His judgments, and to listen to His voice. And the Lord has affirmed today that you are His special people, just as He has promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments. He will exalt you above all nations which He has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that you may be a holy people to the Lord your God, just as He has spoken” (Deut. 26:17-19, MEV). {eoa}

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If Jesus Defeated Satan, Why Do We Have to Fight?

Many who oppose spiritual-warfare practices say we don’t have to fight because the devil is already defeated. Let’s take a moment to remember the Good News.

We win! If you are born again, you have been delivered from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13). Yes, we win—but that

doesn't mean we don't have to fight. Indeed, when we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we effectively enlisted in the army of God. We're in a spiritual war whether we engage our enemy or not. If you don't understand who you are in Christ—if you don't understand your authority in Him—then you cannot successfully wage war against the enemy who is waging war against you.

Jesus “disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them” (Col. 2:15, NKJV). Yes, the devil is already defeated, but after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Paul nevertheless told Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12) and told the Ephesians we “fight ... against ... principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

If Satan and his demons are already defeated, why do we have to fight? Because we live in a world with Satan's fallen angels—and God's fallen men. The war is on for the souls of mankind. Competing with Jesus, who sacrificed His life to set fallen man free, Satan and his demons strategize to keep God's creation in bondage through deception. The kingdom of darkness is working overtime to keep the blinders on lost souls. Part of the reason we're here is to work toward fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

We are Christ's ambassadors to be salt and light, to be a witness that Jesus is alive, and to preach the gospel and make disciples. Satan hates us because we are created in God's image. And so the spiritual warfare ensues. We cannot remain passive in this war. We must be good and faithful servants, fighting the good fight of faith. Jesus expects us to wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. He expects us to co-labor with Him to set the captives free. And so the war ensues.

Paul wrote: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is complete" (2 Cor. 10:3-6).

Of course, it's not just about the lost souls. It's also about our personal relationship with God, our maturity in Christ and fulfilling our destiny in Him. Either way, when it comes to spiritual warfare, the battle often starts in our minds. In contrast, the weapons of Satan are carnal, mighty in our flesh for the erecting of strongholds in our minds—and we're the ones arming him. Before we can walk in fullness of power to set the captives free, we need to win the battles in our own minds. We can win those battles by casting down imaginations—which requires a revelation of the helmet of salvation—and otherwise taking up the whole armor of God. With that understanding, look again at Ephesians 6:10-12.

Thankfully, Paul didn't tell us that we're in a wrestling match with enemies who seek to put us in a stranglehold without being equipped with practical solutions for battle. He followed that thought with a specific instruction (Eph. 6:14-18).

When discussing the whole armor of God, the first line of defense is the truth. When you know the truth, you won't fall for the enemy's lies. The problem is, many sit in churches and hear the truth for years and years (and years) but are still quick to give ear to the enemy's lies. They are, as Paul wrote, "always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). When you aren't a student of the Word—when you aren't a doer of the Word—the devil doesn't have to work too hard. As James said, "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James

1:22). By the same token, if you don't understand the reality of the warfare against you, you won't rightly battle.

Paul instructs us to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). When we speak the Word of God out of our mouths, it serves as a weapon that cuts through every evil plot of the enemy. No devil in hell can come against the Word of God because it's not carnal but mighty—supernatural—in God.

☒ When we find ourselves in the midst of the battle, though, we too often make one of these three common mistakes: (1) We fail to wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; (2) we speak the enemy's fearful lies out of our mouths; or (3) we are double-minded, speaking the Word of God one moment and the enemy's fear-laced lies the next. The only sure way to enforce Jesus' victory in our lives is to consistently wield the sword of the Spirit.

*Adapted from **Jezebel's Puppets** by Jennifer LeClaire, copyright 2016, published by Charisma House. This book will help you recognize the spirit of Jezebel and its cohorts as alluded to in Rev. 2:20. Exposing this destructive team you will learn how to discern each one, break their evil influence and defeat them. To order your copy [click here](#).*

Prayer Power for the Week of March 13, 2016

Recognize this week that even though our Lord defeated Satan at the cross, he still engages us in battle to prevent us from winning the lost and fulfilling our destiny. Ask the Lord to help you "fight the fight of faith" using the sword of the Spirit, agreeing and aligning yourself with His Word, and speaking God's truth over your situation. Continue to pray for worldwide revival, a harvest of souls and opportunities to spread His love and the gospel with those around you. Lift up Israel, the persecuted church and our own nation (James 1:22; Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-6).

16 Days Before Easter: 'Have Mercy on Me!'

When traveling through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus certainly had a lot on His mind—namely the fact He was on His way to His crucifixion.

Yet, Jesus did not refuse the cry of help from a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, who implored Jesus to heal him, to restore his sight. “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me,” Bartimaeus cried.

Although He was on His way to death, Jesus healed Bartimaeus. Can we be like Jesus?

“Today, open your ears to the calls for help that are all around you,” Christian author and Pastor Jamie Buckingham says in this video devotional. “Pause, reach out today and touch someone in need, regardless of how tough your situation is.”

How to Help Your Sons Answer Their Questions About Sex

Suggestion: Have your sons read this article and then discuss it with them.

Did your dad give you “the talk?” If you’re like most of us, then probably not.

I asked the men at *The Man in the Mirror* Bible study, "How many of your dads gave you 'the talk'?" Out of more than 100 men, only five raised their hands.

My "talk" was my mother silently sliding a pamphlet across the front seat one day as we were driving home from school. That was it! Dad never said a word.

That won't cut it today. In fact, giving the talk is out. What's in? It's an ongoing conversation about sex.

So, here's an article that can help you answer questions your sons have about sex. I know these are their questions, because I spent a half day with 15 high school boys one Saturday and had them anonymously write down their questions on 3 x 5 cards.

An Overview For An Ongoing Conversation

One young man asked, "What things should someone my age know about sex?" Another wants to know, "If sex is so good, why should we have to wait?" Good questions.

The Bible teaches that sex is an altogether good and beautiful thing. Sex is one of God's greatest gifts to the human race when it is used according to His plan.

God created sex for two purposes: to make babies, and for a married couple to enjoy physical intimacy with each other.

Using sex for recreation—the way it's portrayed on TV and in movies—hijacks something God made for good. Saint Augustine wrote that everything bad is a corruption of something that was originally meant to be good. When sex is used outside of God's plan a lot of things can, and do, go wrong: sexually transmitted diseases (some of which are incurable—approximately 1 of every 3 adults has an incurable STD), infertility, cervical cancer, AIDS, loss of reputation, depression, discipline from God, and pregnancy outside of

marriage.

Actually God does not put limits on sex. He puts limits on sexual immorality.

Since sex is for propagating the human race, women get pregnant—and they don't have to be married or over 21. Many families know the pain caused by teen pregnancy. God can redeem it, but I'm old enough to have seen it create a lot of sadness. Often, an unplanned pregnancy defines who people become—even in my own extended family.

The decisions raised by an unexpected teen pregnancy are overwhelming:

- Does the girl drop out of school?
- Does the girl go away for a while until she has the baby?
- What about abortion is murder in the eyes of many Christians?
- Do you put the baby up for adoption?
- If the child is kept, who will be the primary care givers?
- Will the grandparents alter their lifestyle to help?
- Where will the money come from?
- Will the father be involved or does he disappear?
- If the father is willing to be involved in parenting, is the mother willing to let him?

Unfortunately, these potential consequences never occur to many young people until they have to make real decisions about real pregnancy.

The number one reason God has guidelines for human sexuality is that sex works very well for its principal purpose—making babies.

Specific Questions Asked By Young Men

Since “the talk” is out, and having an ongoing conversation about sex is in, try discussing these questions over time—and reinforce. I’ve included my short answers, but also do some Google work, ask older dads how they handled these issues, and jot down some reasons to support the family values you want to promote.

1. Is it wrong to have premarital sex if you really love the person? Yes. Sex is intended by God to be monogamous—one man with one woman within marriage.

2. Is it wrong to have oral sex? Yes. The Bible teaches that our entire bodies and the bodies of young women are temples of God’s Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:13, 18-20 says, “The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ... Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

3. How far is too far? Touching her breasts or feeling below her waist is too far. Having her touch you below the waist is too far. Rubbing your bodies together, even if clothed (dry sex), is too far. Talking in a way intended to arouse sexual desire in a woman or anything a woman does to arouse sexual desire in you is too far.

4. If you have already gone too far, what can you do to correct it? If you have given your heart to a young woman and you have had intercourse, you will find it difficult to stop. The best thing to do would be to stop the relationship, repent, and submit to a confidential restoration process with a spiritual mentor like your youth pastor. Next best is to agree together that you want to honor God by abstaining, confess and repent together, and then do not allow yourselves to ever be in a place private enough that you could fall

again. You should tell someone and ask them to hold you accountable. God forgives but also expects us to change by relying upon common sense and the power of His Holy Spirit within us.

5. Is it a sin to masturbate? Is masturbation wrong if I feel it can give me more strength when I go out with my girlfriend (strength to not sin with her)? The Bible does not specifically address masturbation, which is interesting because it easily could have. The Bible does say to avoid sexual immorality or impurity. To avoid sexual immorality, try to keep your mind pure about women and intercourse.

6. Are the swimsuit edition magazines and Victoria Secret catalogs pornographic? Should you be looking at them? They are not pornographic for heterosexual girls who look at them, but they are for the boys because the only reason a boy would look at those pictures is for sexual stimulation.

7. How do you defeat lust? How do you control your sexual thoughts and actions? How can I keep from getting in sexually tempting situations? Lust is sexual desire out of control. That desire is aroused in men mostly by sight. The best way to control yourself is to decide in advance what kind of a man you want to be. Then, don't put yourself in situations that you find tempting. For example, ask your mother to screen your mail for sexually explicit materials—like the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition. Another example would be don't sit on the beach and stare at girls.

8. No one asked this question in my research, but I know it's on your mind: Is there something wrong with you if you have an erection several times a day? It is normal to have an erection (hard penis) as many as several times a day. Erections can result from seeing a girl you find attractive, smelling perfume, a girl touching your arm, a girl's hair brushing against you, or even reading these words. This is normal, not lust. There is nothing wrong with you. On the other hand,

having an erection because you are seeking sexual stimulation is lust. For example, seeking out pornography is lust (sexual desire out of control), whether it's underwear ads in the newspaper or an Internet site.

9. Why is it wrong to look at pornography? Because it arouses sexual desire based upon sexual fantasy. In 2012, Tru Research conducted 2,017 online interviews with teens, ages 13-17, and parents of teens. 32 percent of teens admit to intentionally accessing nude or pornographic content online. Of these, 43 percent do so on a weekly basis. Only 12 percent of parents knew their teens were accessing pornography.

10. How should you treat women if you don't have a male figure to show you? Treat them like you would want a young man to treat your sister. Watch how men you respect treat the women in their lives.

May the Lord be pleased with how we have “an ongoing conversation” between the generations.

Adapted from Patrick Morley's book, The Young Man in the Mirror. For the original article, visit .

3 Ways to Grow Your Self-Discipline

Author Les Parrot tells the following story that inspired me about self-control recently:

“In a small group I participated in some time ago, my friend who was leading gave some materials to a bad-tempered group member.

As he did so, he politely thanked the man with a sour disposition for being there. The man, however, did not even acknowledge it.

Afterward, I asked my friend about it. "A sullen fellow, isn't he?" I commented as we walked away.

"Oh, he's that way every time we meet," shrugged my friend.

"Then why do you continue being so polite to him?" I asked.

My friend replied, "Why should I let him control how I'm going to act?"

Too often, we allow external circumstances or people to control how we are going to act. This is true even in our weight-loss journey.

But if you are tired of being uprooted by your outward circumstances, then you need to know what it takes to grow the fruit of self-control.

In that way, you can stay rooted no matter your outward circumstances or what other people do.

The key to developing self-control is to create an environment that can nurture its growth. Self-control is a fruit of God's Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

As a believer in Christ, you have the seed of self-control already on the inside of you. However, the crop yielded from that seed will depend upon the quality of the soil in which it is planted.

Imagine you take two quality seeds and plant each of them into different environments. You planted one seed into rich earth, full of nutrients and well-watered. It gets plenty of sunshine as well.

In contrast, you plant the other seed in a parched place with

tons of rocks, shallow earth and weeds, and it rarely gets any sun.

Which seed do you think will flourish?

The first one, of course! You see, it wasn't the quality of the seed that was the problem. The problem was the quality of the soil.

The soil's quality determined if the seed would reach its fullest potential.

The good news is that God has given each of us the power to change the quality of the soil in which His seed is planted.

Here are three ways you can improve the quality of the soil and grow your self-control. In this case, the soil is your heart:

1. Prayer. Prayer is simply maintaining a constant awareness of God's presence and communicating with Him throughout the day. You speak with Him and allow Him to speak with you. Your communication with Him should be a constant flow, a source of continual nourishment and refreshing.

As 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Prayer is as vital to your spiritual life as the blood flowing in your body is to your physical life. The minute the blood stops flowing, death starts to occur.

It's the same with a plant. If the sap stops flowing through a plant, then that plant starts to die too.

Without prayer, rejoicing and thankfulness, you are planting God's Word in parched ground. It will never reach its fullest potential and neither will your self-control.

2. Vision. Do you have a vision of what you will look like with self-control fully grown? How will you act? How will you speak as a person of self-control?

Take a moment to think about some common situations you deal with every day. If you were a person of self-control, what would be different in how you respond?

Creating this picture serves the same function as a picture on a packet of seeds. Seed sellers don't put a picture of the seeds on the packet; they put a picture of the fully-grown plant and its fruit!

So if you are buying tomato seeds, there will be a picture of the tomato plant with plenty of tomatoes.

If you lack self-control, then one of the reasons is because you don't have a clear enough picture of what self-control looks like in your life. It is a vague concept in your mind with no connection to reality.

The way to resolve this is to think about situations that test your self-control and write down a picture of how self-control fully grown looks like in that situation. What thoughts would you think?

What would you see in your imagination? This is not a vain imagination, but one with a purpose. It is showing you the person you could be with God's help.

If you ever get discouraged by how slow your self-control is growing, then take a look at the picture on your "seed packet."

3. Weeding. Assess your ground regularly and remove anything that interferes with your self-control's growth. For example, if you have foods in your environment that test you, then remove them. That's weeding in action.

The reason? Why waste energy fighting unnecessary food fights?

If you control those things you can control, then you will have energy and strength available for those unexpected events that test you—and be able to use them to overcome. That's a prime principle we cover in the Take Back Your Temple program.

Here's another point about why it is important to weed. In Luke 17:21, Jesus said,

“For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

What is the kingdom of God? Romans 14:17 says, “For the kingdom of God does not mean eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Your new identity is as the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21), so weed out any thoughts that try to tell you anything different.

Cultivate thoughts that lead to peace and joy, weeding out thoughts that lead to dis-ease and depression. You want to maximize your experience of God's kingdom and create an environment that is friendly to spiritual growth.

If you pay attention every day to prayer, vision, and weeding, then your self-control will grow. After all, it is planted in good ground!

Meditate upon Jesus' wise words today:

“He said, ‘The kingdom of God is like a man who scatters seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he does not know how. For the earth bears fruit by itself: first the blade, then the head, then the full seed in the head. But when the grain is ripe, immediately he applies the sickle because the harvest has come.’” (Mark 4:26-29).

When you submit to the growing process, you will gain the prize!

Be blessed in health, healing and wholeness.

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

17 Days Before Easter: God Is Not an Angry God

Many Christians, Christian author and Pastor Jamie Buckingham says, consider sin an antiquated concept. Many in our Western culture consider guilt a disabling emotion.

And even though acknowledging guilt for one's sins is never easy, it was Jesus who said sin needs to be forgiven because it damages the sinner.

"God's nature is to forgive and forget," Buckingham says in this video devotional. "Today, pause for a moment, seek out our Shepherd, confess your sin and receive God's forgiveness."
{eoa}

How to 'Conquer' the Travesty

of Porn

According to a study, a total of 56 percent of divorce cases involved one partner having an obsessive interest in pornography sites.

KingdomWorksStudios has released a new cinematic film series that's helped over 300,000 men begin the journey to conquer porn and walk in sexual integrity. It's a "journey" because this is no quick fix. It takes the renewal of the mind, and that's a process.

In essence, pornography is destroying families.

"The church is in the sexual battle of its life," says Dr. Doug Weiss, author of the book *Clean*.

"It's going to really sweep through the church like a tsunami wave of destruction in the family," says Dr. James Reeves, senior pastor of City on a Hill Church in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

For more information, visit .

A 10-Minute Total-Body Workout for Busy Days

One of my pet peeves as a personal trainer is hearing people tell me they're "too busy to exercise."

In the past, when I was unaware of the amazing benefits of efficient, high-intensity workouts, I was a bit more

sympathetic, as carving out time to drive to a gym, lift weights, run on the treadmill and drive home again is often as feasible as hopping into a trashcan and flying to Mars. Many people think that in order for exercise to be effective, it has to be done inside a gym and last at least an hour. This simply isn't true.

Today, I'm going to guide you through one of my favorite total-body HIIT routines that you can do *anywhere*. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) describes any workout that alternates between intense bursts of activity and fixed periods of less-intense activity, or even complete rest. These often consist of body-weight movements only, though light dumbbells, kettlebells and other equipment are sometimes used.

Before I continue, I don't suggest you kick weights and lengthier workouts to the curb. Most fitness professionals endorse well-rounded fitness regimens that include a wide variation of modalities, from heavy weightlifting sessions that focus on building muscle and strength, to long runs, bike rides or swims that increase one's endurance and support heart health. Engaging in just one modality will yield results for a while, but eventually our bodies adapt and cease to respond, which signals to us that it's time to change up our routine.

So, if your current workout routine has hit a plateau, or if you're on vacation or experiencing an especially busy day, the following workout is just the ticket. HIIT workouts allow you to burn fat while preserving muscle, boost your metabolism for up to 24 hours after you've finished, and improve your cardiovascular, respiratory, metabolic and mechanical functions. All in 30 minutes or less!

Important: Be sure to take time (5 to 10 minutes) to stretch at the end of every workout, 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, no matter what it is, 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

As you can see, the warm-up 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.

And now, without further ado, here is your 10-minute workout ... with a five-minute warmup for good measure!

Warmup

2 Rounds

20 Butt Kicks (10 each leg)

10 High Kicks (10 each leg)

5 Slow Air Squats (lower for 5 seconds)

3 Burpees

Workout

Perform each exercise for 30 seconds, then rest for 15 seconds before moving on to the next exercise. Repeat the series of exercises five times for a total of 10 minutes.

Burpees

Butt Kicks

Russian Twists

Exercise Instructions (in the order they appear):

Butt Kicks

- Begin by jogging normally, either in place or traveling for a short distance.
- Then begin raising your heels up toward your bottom as you jog, using rapid, forceful movements. Again, you may either do these in place or traveling.

High Kicks

- Stand up straight with your kicking leg just behind your planted leg.
- Kick your leg in front of you. Take it up as high as it will go while maintaining a straight spine as much as possible.
- Return to the starting position, and repeat on the opposite side. You may do these in place or traveling.

Air Squat

- 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.

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

Burpee

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

Russian Twist

Sit on the floor. Lift your feet off the floor a few inches and cross your ankles. Keeping your core tight, twist to one side, bringing your hands toward your hip. Repeat on the opposite side.

“For You will cause my lamp to shine; the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness. For by You I can run through a troop, and by my God I can leap a wall” (Ps. 18:28-29, MEV).

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The Gift of the Spirit Fewer Want to Exercise

The charismatic world is known for embracing the gifts of the Spirit. Who doesn’t like to get a prophetic word? See a miracle, sign or wonder? Receive a healing? Discern a spirit? Flow in words of knowledge and words of wisdom? Pray in tongues and hear the interpretation?

I love to operate in the gifts of the Spirit and watch others step into that stream. It’s refreshing—and it’s the sign of a

healthy congregation. Where the Spirit of the Lord is given liberty—when we get out of the way and let Him have His way—He will often manifest His gifts in our midst. Of course, the greatest gift of all is His presence. Ultimately, that's all we need.

But there is a gift of the Spirit fewer seem to want to exercise in this hour. It's not one of the nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, but it's a gift from the Spirit of God just the same. It's the gift of repentance.

Listen to Jennifer's podcast on this topic: [The Spiritual Gift Every Believer Can Exercise](#).

With hypergrace movement—a wave of teaching that stresses the grace of God while de-emphasizing or negating the need to confess sins and repent—gaining momentum, there's a disturbing trend to approach boldly the throne of grace to find grace while ignoring the need for an ever-flowing river of mercy.

The 1 John 1:8 Reality

The truth is, we have all fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). In fact, we all fall short of the glory of God every day. That's why we need a Savior, and that's why we are charged with working out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

Father doesn't expect us to achieve 100 percent obedience while we are living in these fleshly tents. We will only reach perfection in our resurrected, glorified bodies. But He does expect us to tap into His grace to lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us (Heb. 12:1); to run to Him instead of away from Him when we sin; to wage war on our flesh and spirits tempting us away from His heart; to seek and receive His forgiveness, grace and mercy when we miss the mark (1 John 1:9); and to press toward the mark of the prize (Phil. 3:14). We can't do that if we are not willing to repent.

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1 John 1:8 tells us, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." John also tells us, "Whoever has been born of God does not practice sin, for His seed remains in him. And he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9). Hebrews 13:5 assures us Jesus will never leave us or forsake us, but hiding unrepentant sin in our lives causes us to miss out on deeper intimacy with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We may hide it from others, but we're not hiding it from Him.

A Lifestyle of Repentance

We like to pray 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

That's a strategic prayer. I believe the church needs to repent. But I also believe if we're not individually walking in a lifestyle of repentance—if we're not exercising this gift of the Spirit of God—it hinders corporate repentance. Again, God doesn't expect us to walk in perfection. He knew every single sin you'd commit before He saved you. But let's remember Israel lost a war against its enemy because there was sin in the camp (Josh. 7). We must not tolerate sin in our lives, or families—or anywhere. Where we see a brother or sister in sin, we need to pray and, if we're in relationship, kindly approach them unto Galatians 6:1 restoration.

I am praying that a spirit of repentance is poured over the church in this hour as false prophets continue rising, as apostles merchandise the saints, as sexual immorality and financial impropriety runs rampant and all manner of wicked sin is coming to light in the church. But it starts with each one of us. If we aren't willing to repent on a personal

level—to exercise this spiritual gift—we cannot decry the conditions in the church or in society. Let’s all model the way. {eoa}

WATCH: When You Don’t Feel God in Prayer

Some of our great moments with God are those emotionally high encounters with God. But what about the other times? Here is a video to take on that question.

In the video I mentioned two other posts. Here they are:

Emotion and Prayer

What to do when God seems silent {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .