

# 10 Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

You can't possibly avoid every single cancer-causing substance, and you can't avoid stress—it is a fact of life. What you *can* do, however, is counterbalance stress with daily choices that at least give you a fighting chance.

You can adopt practices that make your body more resilient in the face of cancer. It doesn't really matter whether you are genetically predisposed to contracting a certain kind of cancer. What matters is the genetic expression that comes from your daily choices, behaviors and habits.

It has been said that genetics loads the gun, but daily choices pull the trigger.

**1. Put on the right set of glasses.** Understand that stress is the true culprit in cancer and all chronic disease. Understand that modern medicine sees cancer as a pathology instead of the normal and natural physiological adaptation of the body to stress. Understand that modern medicine only offers the options of a shot, a pill or surgery to combat “pathology” in the body.

**2. Connect with a supportive community.** Surround yourself with positive people. As much as possible, avoid those who live in constant drama. Seek out other likeminded folks who will challenge you and hold you accountable for your self-care.

**3. Be careful what you put into your body.** As much as possible, eat a diet that is organic, raw and highly nutritious. Avoid SCAT—sugar, caffeine, alcohol and tobacco.

Filter your water and drink half your body weight in ounces each day. Avoid grains and sugars, replacing them with healthy fats and vegetables.

**4. Increase your spinal mobility.** Regular chiropractic adjustments release tension in the spinal dura and allow the brain to communicate with every cell in the body. Regular functional movement and exercise break the stress response. Exercise releases endorphins (happy hormones) in the brain.

**5. Rest.** Sleep resets brain function, restores strength and repairs cellular damage. Mental stress causes sleeplessness; but sleeplessness, in turn, causes stress on the body. Adequate, restorative sleep boosts immune function.

**6. Practice detoxification daily.** Drink plenty of filtered, pure water. Eat plenty of cruciferous vegetables (preferably raw). Eat fermented foods and drink fermented beverages like kefir and kombucha. Soak in baths with Epsom salts and coconut oil.

Fast on a regular basis; or practice intermittent fasting daily. Work up a good sweat each and every day.

**7. Keep your body alkalinized.** Cancer thrives in an acidic environment; it cannot grow in an alkaline environment. Meat, grains, alcohol and sugar are acidic. While fruits and vegetables are alkaline. If your blood is too acidic, the cells will not release toxins into the blood. The toxins build up in the cell, causing them also to be too acidic.

**8. Help others.** A recent study found that subjects who focused on finding happiness in their own comfort and pleasure had remarkably unhealthy cellular health profiles, high levels of inflammation in their systems and lower levels of antibodies. In contrast, those who sought happiness through helping others had lower readings for inflammatory factors in their blood and produced more antibodies.

**9. Control your thoughts.** What we allow ourselves to think about directly affects the limbic system—the region of our brains that controls emotions, memories, heart rate, blood pressure and attention span. How we think about life affects

how positive and happy we are, regardless of our circumstances, and that, in turn, facilitates or hinders limbic function. We may not be able to control our circumstances, but we can control our attitudes and responses to them.

**10. Be grateful.** When we choose joy and gratitude, it increases our vibrational energy, which makes us both healthier and happier. Cancer cells vibrate at a low level of energy, so they can't compete with healthy cells that are vibrating at a higher level. Gratitude practiced regularly rewires our brains, breaking the stress response.

Research shows that looking for and expressing thanks for the positive aspects of any situation reduces pain, increases energy, promotes restful sleep, and lowers anxiety and depression. These are all good things, whether one has cancer or not.

*America's leading stress expert, Dr. Pete SuLack is a highly sought-after teacher, lecturer and author. His studies on the effects of stress, coupled with over 1 million patient visits and attention from medical communities, led him to write and create Unhealthy Anonymous to help individuals, corporations and nonprofits mitigate the immense effects of stress on health and human behavior. Visit his website at [. Use code this code to receive a \\$1/month discount!](#)*

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## **When You Get Rebuked for Sharing a True Prophecy**

I've heard plenty of flaky dreams and visions in my day. In fact, not a week goes by when some friend—or absolute,

complete stranger—doesn't send me an unsolicited message about a prophetic dream, vision or word they have for or about me. Honestly, it's somewhat bizarre that so many people are dreaming about me.

Anyway, some of these dreams are extremely accurate and especially helpful. Others are so far off the mark that you have to wonder what they ate before they went to bed (read: pizza dreams), yet the prophecy is relatively harmless. Still others are clearly inspired by a spirit other than the Holy Spirit.

I have to admit, there are times when I wanted to do more than break a word curse—I wanted to issue a rebuke. Up until now, though, I've held my pen and tongue except to teach prophetic protocols. You can read more in my book, *The Making of a Prophet*.

**LISTEN TO MY PODCAST ON THIS TOPIC:** What to Do When You Get Rebuked for Prophecy.

That said, I've heard and read stories about people getting rebuked for sharing prophetic dreams—even 100 percent accurate prophetic dreams that are truly from the Lord. Sometimes the rebuke comes from people who have zero discernment or who are trying to hide something. But other times it's the prophetic person's own fault. That was the case with Joseph.

### **A Prophet With Poor Timing**

When Joseph was 17 years old, he dreamed a dream and apparently told his brothers immediately. Now, they already hated him because their father Jacob favored him more than the others—Jacob even presented Joseph with a special coat of many colors. The Bible says that his brothers “hated him and could not speak peaceably to him” (Gen. 37:4).

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Joseph must have known his brothers didn't like him, so why he would share this prophetic dream is beyond me. It's possible he was operating in pride, and he was certainly unfamiliar with prophetic protocol. After all, there was no school of the prophets. Of course, he could have just been excited about the dream and wanted to share. In any case, it wasn't wisdom to prophesy this to his brothers:

"We were binding sheaves in the field. All of a sudden my sheaf rose up and stood upright, and your sheaves stood around it and bowed down to my sheaf" (Gen. 37:7). It doesn't take a prophet to figure out that this would only cause his brothers to hate him more—and it did, according to verse 8.

That didn't seem to deter young Joseph, though. He had another dream, made the same mistake of telling his brothers and this time told the prophecy to his father also: "The sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing to me" (Gen. 37:9). Jacob wasn't having it. Jacob immediately rebuked Joseph, which probably really stung, given his special bond with his father and his strained relationship with his brothers, who conspired to kill him shortly thereafter.

### **What's the Root?**

Have you ever been rebuked for sharing a true prophetic dream? Many prophetic people have experienced criticism—from people they know and from people they don't—for sharing prophetic dreams. It stings and can make you second-guess whether you really heard from the Lord if you meditate on it too long.

Rather than embracing a spirit of rejection when people don't receive your prophetic ministry, you need to ask the Lord to show you the root issue. Again, it could be that those around you have no discernment. It could be that you missed the mark. It could be that you delivered the message in the wrong spirit. It could be that you misinterpreted the dream when you shared it.

That said, in my experience, one of the biggest reasons people reject true prophetic dreams, visions and words is due to wrong timing. Just because we receive prophetic communication from heaven doesn't mean that we need to immediately share what we saw or heard. That was perhaps Joseph's biggest mistake.

Proverbs 25:11 says, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." If that's true for words, how much more for prophetic words? Timing of the release is almost as important as accuracy in the prophetic. A right word delivered at the wrong time can cause people to reject you—and it can kill your prophetic reputation.

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## **Baptism of Fire: Preparing for the Next Azusa Street Revival**

The Azusa Street Revival was catalytic and played a significant part in the expansion of the Pentecostal movement around the world. This revival was marked by a hunger to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. People from around the world flocked to Los Angeles to be a part of this great move of God and to receive impartation to take back to their nations.

They, like many in the early church in Acts (see Acts 2), waited on the Lord until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit and also spoke in tongues. This all-consuming encounter with God drew people in to a revival that swept across the world.

I have been struck lately by Matthew 3:11-12, in which John the Baptist said:

*"I indeed baptize you with water to repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean His floor and gather His wheat into the granary, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

While Azusa Street was marked with a baptism of the Holy Spirit, I believe that the next great move of God will be marked with a *baptism of fire*. Fire purifies, refines, sanctifies and makes holy. It causes all the dross to dissipate and only the gold to emerge.

Asking for the baptism of fire strips off any enemy of the cross of Christ, even good things that are distractions. There's no greater way to be surrendered than when we are willing to ask God to send His fire over every detail of our lives, relationships, dreams and thoughts and ask Him to burn away anything that is not from Him for this season. When we realize the price He has paid for us (Rom. 8:32), we will be willing to become living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), and we will continue to lay our lives on the altar to burn for Him continually.

It says in Leviticus 6:8-13: The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

What would happen if we lived in a baptism of fire daily? What does it look like to be a burning one in this generation?

There is more for each one of us today. I believe God is asking us to call out for the fire of God to come and consume anything that might get in the way of all He wants to do in our lives. I encourage you right now to ask for the fire of God to fall upon you and for this fire to burn away any

bitterness, unforgiveness, double-mindedness, offense, fear, shame, insecurity, disappointment, hopelessness and discouragement. Ask God to search your heart to see if there is anything holding you back from all that He has. Wait on Him for a few minutes.

As the Holy Spirit brings up people and situations, go and be reconciled today. If someone has an offense against you, go and make amends quickly. Give no foothold for the devil in this time of great awakening that's coming. Always remember that our battle is never against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:10-18) and that you have authority in Christ to tear down every stronghold or enemy of God that tries to oppose you (Rom. 8:31). Stay deeply connected and knit together with the body of Christ in this season, for they will also be your armor bearers.

When the fire falls, the pruning begins and you feel the pain of things leaving in your life you were once comfortable with, ask for even more fire. He wants to purify us so we are prepared to carry what He is about to pour out across the earth. He is looking for pure and holy vessels He can possess and fill with His Holy Spirit and with fire. I encourage you to pray the following prayer out loud:

*God, I ask right now for a fresh baptism of fire over my life. Let your fire fall on every single detail of my life. Burn away anything and everything that is not in line with You in Jesus' name. Purify with fire all of my relationships, thoughts, dreams, desires and situations. Burn away anything that is contrary to your nature or that will hold me back from all that You want to do in and through my life in this season. I surrender all and ask for the fire of consecration to come and set me apart as a burning one for You. Let my love for You be marked by purity, holiness and a burning passion. Fill and possess me with Your Holy Spirit and with fire. I am all Yours. My life is in Your hands. Have Your way in my life today whatever it looks like and no matter the cost, all for*

*Your glory. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.*

I encourage you to get involved in **TheCall Azusa** to take part in re-digging this well of revival at Azusa Street to bring America back to God in our day. {eoa}

To learn more about the Azusa Street Revival and the baptism of the Holy Spirit for today see ***Spirit Flood: Rebirth of Spirit Baptism for the 21st Century in Light of the Azusa Street Revival and the Life of Carrie Judd Montgomery.***

To read about an encounter when fire fell on the sacrifice in a ministry school totally consecrated to God, see ***A Time of New Birth: Consecration with Rees Howells and the Welsh Revival.***

*In addition to authoring Silver to Gold, Spirit Flood, Water to Wine and Life on Wings, **Jennifer A. Miskov** has supported Bill Johnson and Heidi Baker on several writing projects. She was ordained with Iris Global on New Year's Eve 2011 by Heidi Baker. Shortly after, she walked through one of the most stretching times of her life to establish Destiny House in February 2012. She also launched the first of the Annual Healing and Revival Retreats at Carrie Judd Montgomery's Home of Peace that year. Jen currently teaches a few classes at Bethel School of Supernatural Ministry and SUM Theological Seminary as well as hosts Writing in the Glory: How to Write and Publish Your 1st Book workshops.*

*For the original article, visit .*

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# James Goll: Exploring the Lifestyle of a Prophet

A battle is being waged in our day—an end-time battle of passions, an unprecedented competition between the altars of fire. The spirit of this world is out of control and vying for the attention of any half-interested soul. Sometimes it seems we have more “Hollywood” than “holy good” in the church.

But good news is on the horizon. This fierce fight of the ages will escalate as waves of God’s irresistible love wash over us, and the constraints of stale religiosity are replaced by passionate, fiery, relatable Christianity. A revolution of intimacy is coming in the church. Is that not what your heart is aching for? Like John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, we too shall learn to lean our heads on our Master’s chest and rest in the sound of His heart beating in the rhythm of love (John 21:20).

As we look at the lifestyle of intimacy in the life of a prophet, let me share with you some thoughts and principles drawn from the book of Genesis on the relationship between intimacy and the prophetic.

Genesis 2:7 grants some awesome relational insights: Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.” What a beginning! All humankind took on life by the very breath of God’s mouth. Talk about an intimate exchange! Ponder this for a while. In some manner, God blew into the lump of clay that He had fashioned, and Adam’s body took on an added dimension. Man became a living being.

That is what the prophetic life and ministry are all about—human beings being filled with the breath of God and then in turn exhaling onto others the breath of life they have

received from their Creator. This is what our Messiah did as well. After His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples, who were hiding for fear. He said, "As My Father has sent Me, even so I send you" (John 20:21). Then Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (verse 22).

At the Last Supper of Jesus with His trainees, John leaned back on the Lord's chest (John 13:25). What do you think he heard? Yes, probably the pulsating heart of the Savior, but he also would have heard something else: the Messiah's very breath as He inhaled and exhaled. Imagine being so close to the Lord that you hear Him breathing!

Some of the writers of the past knew something of this intimacy. Consider the hymn "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" written in 1878 by Edwin Hatch:

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what Thou dost love,  
And do what Thou wouldst do.  
Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Until my heart is pure,  
Until with Thee I will one will,  
To do and to endure.  
Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Till I am wholly Thine,  
Till all this earthly part of me  
Glows with Thy fire divine.  
Breathe on me, Breath of God,*

*So shall I never die,*

*But live with Thee the perfect life*

*Of Thine eternity.*

Yes, man became a living being when the intimate breath of Almighty God blew into Adam's lungs. So it was that he became a transporter of God's presence, a contagious carrier of the infectious Spirit of God.

### **God's Original Design**

God's original intent was for all of us to be carriers of His presence. Today the Lord is looking for vessels He can breathe into once again. He seeks some He can put His mouth on, as it were, and blow His Spirit into them, so that their lungs, their hearts, their souls, their bodies, their temples will be filled with the very breath of the Almighty. He wants us to be carriers of His most brilliant presence. What could be greater?

That was the Lord's original intent. And we know what followed: "Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they will become one flesh. They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:24-25). Here we are given a graphic picture of what things look like when a man or woman is filled with the brilliance of God's presence. When we are filled with His *pneuma* (the Greek word for *breath*), we are not self-absorbed and fearful but walking with God and others in transparent love.

Adam and Eve were not ashamed. They were not overcome by guilt, nor were they driven by condemnation. They were not hiding behind whatever leaves they could find. They were naked; they were walking in honesty; they were enjoying intimate communion with God; and they "knew" each other.

That is God's design for marriage, which is the picture of the union He plans for us as the bride of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:22-32) and our incredible, glorious Husband. This Master of ours wins our hearts with one glance of His eye (Song 4:9). And the amazing thing is, one glance of our own eyes shining back into His undoes His heart as well. What a profound mystery! The revelation of this truth alone would create a revolution of intimacy among God's people. It is awesome, and it is pictured right here in the Garden of Eden, at the beginning of all things.

Adam and Eve were hiding behind nothing. Their hearts were beating with love for one another, and they were not ashamed. There were no barriers to intimacy.

*\*Excerpted from The Lifestyle of a Prophet. **Dr. James W. Goll** is the cofounder of Encounters Network, a ministry to the nations. He has written fifteen extensive Bible study guides and is the author or coauthor of fourteen books, including The Coming Prophetic Revolution and Praying for Israel's Destiny. Goll is a contributing editor to Kairos magazine and speaks and ministers around the world.*

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## **4 Ways to Deal With Your Daughter's Teen Dramatics**

A long time ago I volunteered with an organization that worked with teenagers.

One day I was running errands when I passed a 16-year-old girl my wife and I had gotten the chance to know and love. We stopped our cars and talked for a minute. When I asked her how she was doing, she said that she wasn't doing well. She and a

good friend were in a big fight.

I asked her what it was about and she admitted that it was something she had done. As I drove away, I thought about how stuff like that was always happening to her. If there was drama, she was usually right in the middle of it. I couldn't understand it. She came from a great family.

Years later, the help of a mentor gave her some insight into herself. She realized that she is drawn to drama, and if it didn't exist, she'd create it. Since then, she has learned how to manage that desire. Whether your daughter creates teen drama or it simply finds her, one thing is clear, it'll happen. When it does, how we respond and help her makes a huge difference.

Here are four points of action for when the drama begins:

### **Know Her**

It's important to study her and understand what makes her tick. In the early years, you may be able to spot if she is someone who likes to be around drama or create it. Does she antagonize her siblings because she's bored? It could be a sign of things to come. The earlier you are able to figure her out how she operates, the better. Then you can discuss why she does what she does with her.

### **Listen Instead of Lecture**

When she is consistently acting out, the easiest thing to turn to will be giving her a rundown of right and wrong. A reprimand or disappointment with her behavior, respect or the right way to treat people will shut down communication. During a lecture, your daughter may nod in agreement or even say, "Sorry", but inside she's on lockdown. It may even excite her to act out more. Start with asking questions. Listen and identify the clues that will lead you both to figure out what is driving the behavior.

## **Recognize and Understand the Pain**

Many times the driving force in any drama is pain and insecurity. The goal should be to lead her to reveal that pain so you can offer it a tender and healing touch. Showing her you understand her hurt and validating her feelings will go a long way toward moving to more healthy behavior. Empathizing and providing comfort will make her more apt to listen to you.

## **Rationalize for Her**

Finally, when you have gathered all of the information below the surface, give her a clear picture of what is happening. Explain what is causing her to do what she does. Then express your concerns for her and where her behavior will lead. Ask her and think through together better and more constructive ways to respond to her hurt and perhaps her natural tendency toward drama.

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*For the original article, visit .*

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# **6 Signs Your Gut Is Unhealthy**

The “gut” is a complex organ that can provide us with many clues related to health. Some of the signs of a healthy, or unhealthy, gut are obvious.

A few of the signs of an unhealthy gut include having issues with diarrhea, bloating and constipation, as noted by Dr. K. King.

Research in the area of “gut balance” is evolving all the

time, and the complexity is truly amazing. A healthy gut can ward off diseases and fight infections, just to name a few benefits. The perfect balance of microbiomes in the colon are essential to this process.

## **Let's Talk About the 6 Signs**

**1. Do you have issues with diarrhea?** Individuals who have ongoing issues with diarrhea are at risk for an imperfect environment for gut bacteria. Also, those who take antibiotics followed by bouts of diarrhea probably have an upset internal system within the intestines/colon. When bad bacteria far outweigh the good, there is the possibility of trouble on the horizon that can negatively impact health.

**2. Are you stressed/anxious much of the time?** Individuals who are under stress for long periods of time are at risk for developing "bad gut" environments. Stress causes the body functions to be less than optimal. According to the Annals of Gastroenterology, many people who are under stress consistently have been seen to have an imperfect balance of good/bad flora within the intestines. The result is nonoptimal health.

**3. Are you lactose intolerant, or do you have food allergies?** Food allergies can create inflammation within the body. Individuals who are also lactose intolerant can have challenges keeping the body in perfect working order. According to Dr. King, individuals who do not tolerate milk well may benefit substantially by taking probiotics. A healthy gut can also mean fewer food sensitivities.

**4. Do you have challenges with inflammation?** Inflammation within the body can create havoc when it comes to maintaining good health. Research studies are being conducted in the area of rheumatoid arthritis, which is an inflammatory disease. They are finding a possible link between the balance of the gut verses how the body responds to fighting

inflammation. Studies (with animals) are noted in the *Nature Review Rheumatology* documenting positive case studies showing the link between inflammatory response and gut bacteria.

**5. Do you get sick all the time?** Individuals who fight sickness on a routine basis should consider their digestive system. Plenty of good bacteria are needed in the gut to help us to stay healthy. Having the right balance is key to our immune system working efficiently.

**6. Do you have ongoing skin conditions?** Skin conditions can be a result of having an unbalanced gut. Some of the conditions of concern include acne, eczema, psoriasis and rosacea. According to Dr. Stokes and Dr. Pillsbury, there is a connection which can compromise how well our bodies suffice. Acne and other skin conditions can definitely be a result of the balance of the intestinal flora.

## The Bottom Line

The bottom line is it is *highly* important for the “gut” to hold the proper amount of good bacteria that creates a healthy environment within. Adding the right supplements, such as Dr. Colbert’s Fermented Green SupremeFood and Living Probiotic, can make this healthy system possible, giving your body what it truly needs. Decreasing stressors in life will also help the body to work the way God created it to work!

For more information on Dr. Colbert’s Fermented Green SupremeFood and Living Probiotic, please [click here](#). {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .

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## **Are You a Follower of Jesus or Simply a Fan?**

Let me be the first to say that this column—as with any Step out of the Boat columns I write—isn't meant to chastise or point fingers. It isn't meant to bring on guilt or condemnation.

Writing this, as I always do, I hope to spur you to bigger and better things with Christ. If you are struggling with anything, I want to encourage you that there is something better out there, and it can be found in Jesus. That is my prayer for you.

That said, I must confess that my job allowed me to come across Kyle Idleman's 2011 book *Not a Fan* about three years ago. For some reason that I now fully understand, the title of the book didn't resonate with me and I simply tossed it aside.

It wasn't until my pastor, Ed Garvin, recommended the book during a recent church service that I committed to read it. Pastor Garvin explained how it is a life-changer, and of course, now, I'm always intrigued by something when it gets that type of endorsement.

So why wouldn't I read it when I first saw it back in 2012? Let's just say my walk with Jesus, as much as I wanted to believe it was stellar, was anything but. You could say that I

was a fan of Jesus and not a follower, as Idleman puts it.

Most times the prologue of a book will hook you, and Idleman's prologue to *Not a Fan* isn't any different. But instead of getting a celebrity endorsement for the book, Idleman caught my attention by offering an apology and an interesting take on John 6.

You know the old story about how Jesus fed the 5,000. Yes, Jesus truly performed a miracle, and it resulted in thousands of people camping overnight to hear Jesus the next day.

But ask yourself, why do you think many of them stayed around? Could it be that they figured Jesus would feed them again? Give anyone free food, and they'll become a fan, especially if you do it repeatedly.

Jesus wasn't about to become their meal ticket. He and His friends got into a boat and traveled to the other side of the sea. In John 6:26, He said, "Truly, truly I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for that food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For God the Father has set His seal on Him."

In verse 66, we come to find out that many would abandon Jesus because He neglected to offer them anything else tangible. "From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him."

And Jesus did not chase after them. Idleman says, "He doesn't soften His message to make it more appealing. ... He seems OK with the fact that His popularity has plummeted."

In other words, when it comes to followers, Jesus isn't searching for big numbers. He's looking for a level of commitment from us.

Remember Nicodemus? As a member of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus heard Jesus preach and became a fan. But he didn't make a full-time commitment because he was afraid his reputation would be besmirched by admitting he was an admirer of Jesus. He would be forced to choose between religion and his relationship with Jesus—his status as a follower or a fan. Eventually, we read that he chose Jesus.

So are you a follower or a fan? Have you made a decision for Jesus or have you made a commitment to Him?

Many of us may say we're His followers with our flattering tongues (I know I did for years), but our actions fall way short of what that really means. I was in one of the groups that Idleman calls the "Jesus fish on the back of my car" group. Just because I went to church three times a month, repeated a prayer after a preacher or had a Christian worship song as my ringtone didn't make me a Christian.

Over the past year, it became very clear to me that it was time. It was time to "Define the Relationship," as Idleman says.

You've done that many times in your life, including when you got married. When you define the relationship, you determine your level of commitment.

For me, that meant:

- Trusting God with everything (marriage, children, finances, job)
- Amping up my commitment to prayer
- Immersing myself in God's Word
- Taking on the heart of a servant

Since I have taken on a deeper commitment to Christ, I can honestly tell you that I have seen a change in my level of inner peace. That doesn't mean my life issues have ceased to exist, but I have learned to cast my cares upon Him (1 Pet.

5:7). I decided to stop trying to do it on my own because, frankly, I can't, and it's exhausting to try.

So I ask you, have you determined your level of commitment to Jesus? Is it casual or deeply serious? What can you do now to make a real commitment to your Lord and Savior?

I implore you, please don't be as Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:5, "having a form of godliness, but denying its power."

So are you a fan, or are you a follower? And if you're a follower, will you pass this on to someone whom you believe is a fan?

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

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## How to Turn Shame Into Glory

Everything Jesus did in the Gospels was either surprising or stunning. What happened on the mountain with Peter, James and John is no exception.

For one fleeting moment, Jesus was transfigured, unveiling His real identity before them, and it was dazzling (Mark 9:2-8). The Gospel of Mark describes His clothes radiating a brilliant, blinding light; Matthew says His face shone as the sun. The one who veiled Himself in flesh and took on the shame of the cross is briefly seen as the true King of glory.

Jesus took on flesh like us for one purpose only—so that we could become like Him. The whole point of the cross and resurrection is to make a way for us to take on glory ourselves. Glory is represented in the Bible as brilliant light, but it connotes approval, right standing, and affirmation from God. It is to feel fully known, loved and

enjoyed as men.

Alas, our stories are not filled with glory but with its counter opposite—shame. One of my more vivid moments of shame happened in the 10th grade.

I had been persuaded by a friend against initial objections to go on a blind date to a high school sorority presentation. Having never worn a tuxedo, I struggled to put on the cummerbund and cufflinks, but became really perplexed when I could find no bowtie in the rental clothing. When we arrived, I saw bowties on all the young men and to my horror realized I had come incorrectly dressed.

But the real moment of shame happened during the actual presentation. As I walked across the stage with my date, the spotlight hit us, and I was exposed for everyone there to see. As we walked off, I even heard several mocking voices refer to my improper attire. To make matters worse, when I got home and put the tuxedo back in the hanger, I discovered there a box I had missed containing—you guessed it—the bowtie. I felt utter self-contempt for being so stupid.

We are shamed in the presence of others, and only in the presence of others can we be healed.

This story follows the same pattern of so many other stories of shame I have heard. Shame is being exposed before others as contemptible, unworthy of love and worthy of mockery. It quickly turns into hatred, either toward those shaming us or, more likely, toward ourselves.

Finally, along with the hatred comes a vow never to be found in that situation again. Overall, shame is a primal sense that something is deeply flawed about us and that we must hide as a result. It is what Adam and Eve did after the fall and what we have been repeating ever since. Shame has drastically shaped the way every man sees himself.

So how can shame turn into glory? First, we were shamed in the presence of others, and only in the presence of others can we be healed. We must take the risk to tell our stories to trusted brothers, especially the shameful parts. Only then can the terror of being exposed be transformed into the delight of being known. The very thing that shamed us can now become the very thing for which we are loved. My own work with men in story groups constantly attests to this truth.

But Jesus will do the deeper work here, as we learn to give our shame as well as our sin to Him, for He bore both on the cross. He will then teach us to see ourselves through His eyes, as those whom He fully knows, loves and enjoys, as His own treasured brothers. We begin to taste the glory that those three disciples only saw on that mountain. It's a glory that trumps shame now and will one day triumph over shame forever.

This new year, ask Jesus to start turning your shame into glory.

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*For the original article, visit .*

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## **Study: Stress of Alzheimer's**

# Wears Hardest on Spouses

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease isn't easy under the best of circumstances, but it may be much more stressful for spouses and people who suffer from depression, a Finnish study suggests.

Researchers followed 236 family caregivers of Alzheimer's patients for three years after the diagnosis. Caregiving appeared to be much more stressful for people who were married to the patients or who suffered from depression when the study began.

"Even minor depressive symptoms at the beginning of caregiving are a significant predictor of psychological distress during the years of caregiving," lead study author Tarja Valimaki of the University of Eastern Finland said by email.

The findings suggest that spousal caregivers should receive mental health evaluations at the time that their loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's, Valimaki added.

"Alzheimer's disease patients' home care is reliant on caregivers, and it is not reasonable for spousal caregivers to put their own health at risk due to the caregiving," Valimaki said.

Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. It is the most common cause of dementia among older adults and a leading cause of death among the elderly.

The study included 166 Alzheimer's patients being cared for by their spouses, as well as 70 patients being cared for by other loved ones. Researchers assessed psychological stress by asking caregivers about their ability carry out daily activities, social functioning, and the appearance of new

sources of distress or concern in their lives.

At the start of the study, caregivers and patients who lived together had typically been sharing a home for more than three decades. Spousal caregivers were older and reported more depression than caregivers who weren't married to the patients.

Over three years, psychological distress appeared to increase significantly among spousal caregivers but not among non-spousal caregivers, the study found.

One limitation of the study is that almost half of the participants dropped out before the end, the authors acknowledge in the *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology*.

Even so, the study highlights the need for doctors and nurses to consider two people patients in an Alzheimer's diagnosis – both the person diagnosed and their partner or spouse, said Barbara Given, a researcher at the college of nursing at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

“Not everyone can be a good caregiver and as professionals we need to do an assessment and determine who can do it, who wants to do it, and who needs other support to do it,” Given, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email.

Another challenge may be financial, noted Carol Levine, director of the families and health care project at the United Hospital Fund in New York City.

“Perhaps there are alternatives in the Finnish system; in the U.S. there are few alternatives and those that do exist are expensive and beyond the reach of most families (assisted-living or full-time home care) or considered unacceptable (a long-term care facility),” Levine, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email.

# 10 Keys to Breaking the Habit of Mediocrity

“Not that I have already attained or have already been perfected, but I follow after it so that I may lay hold of that for which I was seized by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not count myself to have attained, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Phil. 3:12-13).

Here are 10 keys to breaking the habit of mediocrity:

## 1. Champions do daily what the average do occasionally.

- A lot of people expect an excellent life with 80 percent effort.
- Inertia comes in the last effort.
- You will never break the grip of mediocrity with a halfhearted effort.

## 2. Champions do not believe in luck.

- Don't bet your life on luck and don't put your faith in fate.
- Champions believe in practice.
- You may well be gifted, but your gift must be exercised to be strengthened.
- You must sharpen your skill set (Eccl. 10:10).

## 3. You will never become the best you can be without facing the violent opposition of mediocrity.

- Those who have chosen to settle often come into contention with those who want to break out of the norm.
- Mediocrity is the best of the worst and the worst of the best.

#### **4. Don't be surprised by the claws of compromise that will grasp at you to keep you from taking one step beyond being average.**

- The opposite of courage isn't fear; it's compromise.
- Write a statement affirming your desire toward excellence, place it on the mirror so that you remind yourself in the morning to be encouraged.

#### **5. Every level is the test of potential.**

- The moment that you show faithfulness, you double your potential. Jesus taught an amazing principle regarding a man who entrusted his money to three managers. Two of the three doubled his money, proving their faithfulness to their present ability. The third manager despised his boss, considering that he was harsh and demanding. The unfaithful manager was fired and lost the ability that he once had mastered (Matt. 25).
- If you've not been faithful to another man's property, who will entrust you with your own?

#### **6. Those who no longer dream, often despise those who still dare to dream.**

- I've noticed that many people have given up on their dreams. Rather than cheering on others, they often do everything they can to discourage dreamers.
- If you're going to push beyond mediocrity and achieve the dream, you may have to limit the access of those who mock your efforts.

#### **7. Excellence never says, "Good enough."**

- No one stands up to applaud mediocrity.

- You are more than what you've been, not nearly what you'll be.

**8. Average people make their decisions according to the present, not the future.**

- Denial of a craving is the sign of maturity and mastery of self.
- Live like no one else so one day you can live like no one else.
- Champions deny the appetite of the present in order to protect their purpose.

**9. In the pursuit of your dream, do not allow a stopover to become a settlement.**

- Take the next step.
- God leads us in steps, not in leaps.
- The only one to suggest taking a leap of faith was Satan.

**10. A real person of faith believes for something that may require longer than his own lifetime to achieve.**

- Hebrews 11:13-16

*FivestarMan was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

*For the original article, visit .*