

8 Ways to Avoid Holiday Weight Gain

According to , there are only 49 days, 12 hours, and 51 minutes left 'til Christmas! That is a *LOT* of time to celebrate, shop, and, let's be honest, overindulge on all things baked with sugar and spice and everything nice.

Between the time stores cram their aisles with sticky slews of Halloween candy and the moment they finally remove the last gingerbread man from their pastry case, Americans will have spent over \$2 billion on candy and other sweet treats. With that in mind, it's no wonder the average American gains 1-2 pounds during the holidays and—here's the kicker—doesn't lose it in the new year. Multiply 1 or 2 pounds by 5 or 10 years, and we can easily see how many middle-aged adults are well overweight.

This time of year, I often hear people joke about how thankful they are that the holiday season happens to occur during the cold-weather months. Therefore, they can rely on sweatpants and hoodies to conceal the fact that, when it comes to their eating habits, they're on Santa's "Naughty" list. But the fact is, we don't have to be naughty.

Simultaneously being "nice" and feeling satisfied (not deprived!) *is* possible ... and your sweats can be reserved for gym sessions only! Here are my top tips for staying slim 'til Santa comes:

1. Eat before you eat. I know, I know, how can eating before you eat keep unwanted pounds at bay? If you eat a healthy, satisfying snack before attending your fifth Christmas party of the month, you'll be less likely to indulge in a plateful of high-calorie finger foods and decadent desserts. A half hour or so before you walk out the door, eat a small meal that

is high in appetite-suppressing protein. I personally prefer Greek yogurt or a protein shake that is free of artificial sweeteners, which can promote cravings. Other options might include an egg white omelet with salsa and veggies, cottage cheese and an apple (high-fiber foods will also keep you feeling full!), or three to four ounces of turkey or chicken.

2. Bring your own healthy dish. Once you arrive to Temptation Island, , the Christmas party or Thanksgiving dinner, etc., it's wise to be armed with your own healthy side dish lest you unwittingly end up consuming a day's worth of calories in one sitting. Preparing your own dish will a.) Likely be greatly appreciated by your hosts, b.) Likely be appreciated by other health-minded merry-makers like yourself, and c.) Provide a balanced meal that will give your body the nutrients it needs while fending off the guilt and excess food it doesn't.

3. Use a smaller plate. This is of course easier to do when you're at your own home and can select which plate to use, but if you have a choice, always eat from a small plate during the holidays. The brain associates a big blank space on the plate with less food, which may prompt you to pile on two or three servings instead of one, or encourage you to go back for seconds. And obviously, smaller plates require smaller, adequate portions.

4. Make healthier options. If you and/or your family are craving gingerbread men, pumpkin bread, peppermint patties and the like, hop online and search for healthier versions of these holiday favorites. Recently, I've been loving experimenting with Kodiak Cakes pancake and baking mix, which is made with whole grains and also offers gluten-free and high-protein varieties.

A few of my favorite ingredient alternatives for "healthifying" baked goods are:

- Almond milk or cashew milk for whole milk

- Unsweetened applesauce for half the amount of oil the recipe calls for
- Two egg whites for each whole egg
- Olive oil cooking spray instead of butter, shortening, or oil to help with sticking
- Low fat cottage cheese (puréed until smooth) instead of full fat cream cheese
- Cacao nibs instead of chocolate chips

5. Three words: 'No, thank you.' Don't let your twinkly-eyed, rosy-cheeked grandmother or your pushy mom pressure you into cleaning your plate or having a second slice of pecan pie. It is 100 percent OK to respectfully decline. Just because everyone else may be doing it doesn't mean you should. In fact, it may be that you can serve as a positive example! Enjoy in moderation, and then stay committed to your goal of enjoying a healthy holidays.

6. Make Tupperware your best friend. If hosting at your house, make sure you have plenty of Tupperware on hand with which to pile leftovers into and send away with your guests! Having Grandma's World Famous Sugar Cookies on display in your kitchen won't do your waistline any favors.

7. Get minty. After you eat, pop a mint, piece of gum, or one of those super-strong Listerine PocketPacs into your mouth. Having that fresh, just-brushed taste will dissuade you from overeating. Chewing gum while you cook is also a great way to distract your mouth from mindless snacking and "taste testing."

8. Just do it and move on. Last but not least, eat the cookie! Or the slice of apple pie, the piece of red velvet cake, the gooey brownie, whatever it is! It's much better to acknowledge cravings instead of shoving them out of mind as that often leads to bingeing later. Indulging a craving, as long as it's in moderation, will nix the desire for it.

Forbidding a favorite food during the holiday season will only make it more irresistible. If you still feel cravings after you partake, do something to get your mind off it, such as calling a friend, going for a walk, or watching a Christmas movie. Research shows that daydreaming about pleasant activities or scenes can reduce the intensity of food cravings.

I hope you find these tips helpful! If you have any questions or need more tips, reach out to me on Twitter @dandersontyler or Instagram @dianaandersontyler. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit [.](#)

What Place Does God Hold on Your Daily Life List?

I thank God every day that I work for a company where, on Monday mornings, our CEO has allowed for a short time of worship and devotional to help start our week well. Imagine that—we're actually getting paid to worship God!

While many might see this as a tremendous blessing and privilege—which undoubtedly it is—it is also a reminder of our obligation to keep God No. 1 in every area of our life. It is an ideal that has taken me a lot longer to embrace than I care

to admit.

I've worked at Charisma Media for nearly 3 1/2 years, and it's only been in the last couple of months that I've begun to come to Monday morning worship on a regular basis. It took the prompting of the Holy Spirit—and our publisher Dr. Steve Greene—to remind me that any work I may have is secondary to honoring God. Any deadlines I may have will keep. God won't.

It's all about priorities, Dr. Greene says with conviction.

You don't have to tell me 100 times—maybe only 99.

Although I may have gone to church the previous day, it's always a blessing to praise and worship God more on Monday. I've now made it a priority to attend, and my obedience has paid off handsomely as my Mondays do not seem so overwhelming.

Chances are, if you're reading this, you're like me in that you want to experience God's love, peace and joy every day and to walk and live habitually for Him. But what does that look like?

Joyce Meyer tell us that, "the key to having God's 'abundant life' is keeping Him in His rightful place in our priorities." According to Genesis 17:1, we are to "walk and live habitually" before God and be blameless, wholehearted and complete.

We can do this by establishing daily habits of prayer, worship and consistently spending time in His Word. We can do this by recognizing the distractions and idols in our lives. Idol is a blunt word, but anything that comes before God is an idol, according to the First Commandment. The sooner most of us—including myself—realize this, the sooner we can enjoy God's "abundant life."

I don't wish to use a draconian tone, but we need to eradicate the idols from our lives and stop chasing the quixotic things

of this world.

My dear sister in Christ and our senior editor, Jennifer LeClaire, wrote recently that she heard the Lord say: “Millions die and go to hell every day because My people who are called by My name are not about My business. ... I am looking for those in this hour who will look up instead of looking back; who will cry out; who will press in; who will determine in their hearts to see My kingdom come and My will done on the earth—in your cities and families—as it is in heaven.”

Unlike us at Charisma Media, most of you are not afforded the opportunity to worship God during work hours. But there is an alternative. Commit to God the first fruits of your week by praying and worshiping Him before you go work each Monday morning. Do a shorter version every morning. As you live to please God, He promises to bless your life.

I’m sure many of you have heard this many times before. But I speak from my heart when I say that nothing in this world, not even your family, can fill the emptiness that exists when God is low on your priority list. “Draw near to him, and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8).

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

**Prophecy: God Is Calling
History Makers to the Prayer**

Closet

Two weeks ago I lay face down at Awakening House of Prayer, and the Holy Spirit showed me things to come—and it's not all good. That didn't surprise me, of course, but some of the things I saw shook me to the core.

If you've read my columns for any length of time, you know that I'm sober-minded but also full of hope. You know that I once saw a tsunami of perversion heading for America. But you also know that the Lord told me He will bring a Third Great Awakening to this nation.

As I stretched out on the carpet in the prayer room, I found myself grieving. The fear of the Lord struck my heart. I saw the persecution that is coming to America. I mourned over the blood of abortion that is on our hands. I pondered the eternal value of how I spend my time. I considered the failure of the church to be salt and light. And I felt the pain of God's heart.

Taking an Eternal Perspective

God wants to break out, break in and pour out His Spirit over America. But here's the issue: We're waiting on God to move, and He wants to move us. We're praying for God to send revival, but He wants to revive us. We're asking for an outpouring of glory, but we need an outpouring of repentance first.

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I didn't sleep much that night as I pondered how so much of what I do makes no impact on anyone. I woke up early and prayed in the Spirit for over an hour trying to come to grips with the reality of where America is heading if we don't repent. We like to pray 2 Chronicles 7:14, but so many of us

fail to live 2 Chronicles 7:14.

I watched David Wilkerson's video montage on anguish. I listened to Leonard Ravenhill's classics on revival. The Holy Spirit prayed through me with groans too deep for words (Rom. 8:26). I considered what love really is. After all, we can pray in the tongues of men and angels, we can prophesy with the best of them, we can feed the poor, we can have mountain-moving faith, we can even die for the sake of the gospel, but without love it's useless (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3).

It's true that "love suffers long and is kind; love envies not; love flaunts not itself and is not puffed up, does not behave itself improperly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-6).

Love also warns, but it does not seek to breed fear for profit's sake. Love makes intercession. Love stands in the gap and on the wall. Love has violent faith that presses into what God is saying and doing in this hour despite what it looks like. Love hears His voice and sounds the alarm. Love carries the burden of His heart and prays until something happens.

Overcoming the Reality of Now

That morning, while I was in my room praying, I heard the Lord say this:

"If My people who are called by My name would think more about life in 1,000 years than life tomorrow, they would make a greater impact in their generation. But the cares of this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life and other demonic distractions have consumed many with the reality of now instead of the reality-of eternity.

"Millions die and go to hell every day because My people who are called by My name are not about My business. Rights and

freedoms are lost, people murdered, lives destroyed, babies aborted because My people who are called by my name are not about My business.

“I am looking for those in this hour who will look up instead of looking back; who will cry out; who will press in; who will determine in their hearts to see My kingdom come and My will done on the earth—in your cities and families—as it is in heaven.

“I want to pour out My Spirit. I want to save souls. I want to heal sick bodies. I want to restore broken families. I am depending on you to rise up and fight on your knees like there’s no tomorrow because for many there isn’t.

“Who shall I send to the closet of prayer to shape history? Who will go for Me? I will show myself strong in your life. I will take care of your needs. I will bless you and keep you. I will show you things to come if you will partner with Me in the place of prayer. I will do it, and I will be glorified.”

Who will answer this call in their generation?

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How to Be a Christian in a Public School

No matter if you are a student in high school or a junior in college, the pressure of being a Christian in a public school setting seems to be talked about pretty often. The reality is, you don't need to worry. There will be trials, but God has you covered.

Here are some things that will help you on your journey of being a Christian in a public school:

1. Remove any thought of being "better" than your peers. You're human. Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone has flaws. Don't allow yourself to believe the lie that you are better than others because of your faith. Instead, humble yourself before those you come in contact with and make sure to be a living example of humility and grace.

2. Allow God to guide your words, actions and steps. Don't try to do things on your own. Allow God to guide every step of your schooling career, and this includes on and off campus. If you're going to claim to be a Christian, please make sure that you are truly surrendering to divine direction. Don't make Jesus look like a fool because of your own personal decisions. Walk in truth, extend grace and put the needs of others before yourself.

3. Don't silo yourself. You don't have to spend your time in the corner of the gym singing "*God's not dead. He's surely alive!*" in order to be a Christian in a public school.

Not to mention you'll probably never find yourself in a situation that most Christian movies portray public schools to be like. You need to make a priority of removing yourself from anything that will silo you from others, and instead allow yourself to embrace and welcome the lives of others into

your personal life. Be known as someone who is approachable, not cold and distant.

Also remember that there is nothing wrong with spending time with unbelievers, as long as these people aren't directly influencing you in a negative manner. I'd actually encourage you to have some friends who don't necessarily see eye-to-eye with everything you believe. Why? It's because it's good for your soul. Back to my previous statement ... be approachable.

You've Got This

Don't stress about being a Christian in a public school. There's no need to worry. Stand true to your beliefs, but be compassionate to those who don't see eye to eye with you. Kill them with kindness, and this includes any of your teachers. You've got this. {eoa}

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3 Tips to Help Guide Your Child's Online Life

While the Internet brings a wealth of information instantly to our finger tips, it also throws our children into an ocean of risk. Too often, our kids navigate those waters without a life preserver and become bait for the enemy's piranha-like feeding frenzy to attack the weak.

Parents today have more than their neighborhoods, schools and kids' friends to worry about. The enemy is cleverly casting nets online fishing for their souls and God's men must be

aware of where their kids are swimming.

For example, social media has brought the world together, while giving predators tools to connect while disguised in sheep's clothing. Online video gaming, once a harmless recreation (remember Atari?), now provides realms of obscene and violent behaviors. And with every online search, marketers of all kinds of dangerous material get closer to home.

The lesson from 1 Peter 5:8-9 is as true as it ever was, saying "Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him firmly in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world."

As our kids tune into social media from morning to night on any device, posting, tweeting, instagramming, snapchatting etc., and online gamers disappear from the "real world" to indulge in fantasy worlds, God's man must be alert, sober minded and resist the enemy.

Here are three tips to managing your kids' online lives:

1. Engage. Your kids need you to "be alert" as "Big Brother" online. Get engaged in their online worlds, whether it's social media or video games.

Find out what social media they are involved in. Friend them on Facebook, follow their Tweets, become Instagram friends so you can see who they are following and who are following them. And, you can monitor their posts. For the online gamers, spend 30 minutes or so a week to do your own "scouting" of your kid's "progress" in the game world.

2. Enlist support. We need help. We need other people, including our kids, to watch out for us and who courageously confront us. It's mission-critical to have additional eyes and

ears online who will bring issues to the table, help find Biblical answers and share godly wisdom to sensitive parenting challenges.

Additional practical tips include monitoring their email, download parenting control software to prevent unwanted illicit material from showing up on screen, use privacy settings on your child's profiles, create safe screen names, keep the computer in open sight, limit data usage on mobile devices, and make sure your kids know what information to keep private i.e., social security numbers, address, phone numbers and bank credit card information.

Being of "sober mind" is not just talking about intoxication. It also means to have a "serious attitude or quality." Managing your kid's online life is serious business, not to be taken lightly.

3. Encourage communication. God's man must nurture an environment where openness and honesty are welcomed, for good and bad behavior. It's best if ease of communication is established in your kid's early years, but it's never too late. Talk with your kids about what's going on online—good or bad. Make your values and beliefs a common topic, and compare them with behavior online.

At my house, our values are 1-love God and 2-we help people. My kids know this. So it's easy to ask, "is what you're doing online accomplishing either of these values?" If so, great. Kudos. If not, then dive deeper into the values and why they are important, and imagine the risks created should those values be removed.

That's being alert, sober minded and resisting the enemy. If that doesn't help, try throwing a life preserver over the keyboard.

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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 [and](#) start your men's group today!

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Who Wouldn't Want to Live Here?

Peace a wonderful place to live, isn't it?

The gift of peace, and the choice to remain in that place of peace, provides comfort and valuable resources almost too precious to express.

Who wouldn't want to live in a place of peace? It's almost like saying, "Who wouldn't want to visit Hawaii?"

When the cares and concerns of life loom menacingly on the dark horizon like a growing and fierce storm, peace is heaven's gift to a troubled and fretful soul.

God gently offers, in that moment of unsettled emotions and of fearful anxiety, "Wouldn't you like to go to a place of peace with Me?"

I realized recently, while I was traveling and observing the expressions of various and rushing travelers that not many

people choose to live in a place of peace. Most people frantically react to life and then traverse from the Land of Frustration to the Isle of Impatience with a quick side trip to Angry Mount and back again.

Who wants to live in a place of volcanic upheaval and uncontrollable tempest? Peace sounds like a much more ... well ... "peaceful" destination to me!

So ... if peace is uncommonly valuable and even utterly desirable, then why is peace so elusive and difficult to capture? Why does peace seem to flit in and out of our lives with not much actuality and very little tenacity?

I have come to believe that peace, although not tangible, is certainly substantial; and that true peace, although invisible, is a strong determinant in reaching one's destination.

"You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." (Isaiah 26:3).

Peace is a result of trusting a loving Father who knows best and who loves the most. Peace comes rushing in when a believer decides to believe.

Peace is delivered in that infamous, "Aha!" moment of life. When you finally realize that you serve a God who is an expert at working all things together for good and that you are the beneficiary of His incredible competence.

Peace! There it is!! I see it now!

Peace is a gift that is bestowed upon those who know of no other way to live than to take up permanent residence in His joyful and comforting presence.

It is humanly impossible to stir up peace ... to beg for peace ... to buy peace ... or to mimic peace.

Peace is found along the road marked "Trust" and you will find that it is a sure and delightful destination.

No matter what you are going through today ... be certain of this ... peace is just one trusting choice away.

Take your eyes off your circumstances ... remove your heart from boiling emotions ... and begin to sing a melody of the resilient soul,

"Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!

How I've proved Him o'er and o'er.

Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!

Oh for grace to trust Him more!"

Now sing it again. And again.

Sing it while the storm is raging and when the wind is roaring.

Sing it internally when voices are yelling and anger is unleashed around you.

Are you there yet? Have you reached the place of peace?

"You are my hiding place; You will preserve me from trouble; You will surround me with shouts of deliverance!" (Psalm 32:7). {eoa}

Carol McLeod is an author and popular speaker at women's conferences and retreats, where she teaches the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm. Carol encourages and empowers women with passionate and practical, biblical messages mixed with her own special brand of hope and humor. She has written five books: *No More Ordinary, Holy Estrogen!*, *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart and Defiant Joy!* Her most recent book, *Refined: Finding Joy in the Midst of the Fire*, was released on Aug. 1. Her teaching DVD *The Rooms of a Woman's Heart* won the Telly

Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming.

10 Views That Drastically Change Your Biblical Belief

When I was a new Christian, I naively thought that everyone read the Bible the same way with virtually one interpretation that all born again Christians would have.

One of the biggest shocks I experienced occurred about six months into my walk with God, when I met a fundamentalist Baptist preacher who was trying to convince me that all Pentecostals were being misled by the devil.

In the years since my conversion, I have been greatly impacted by the power our paradigms or perspectives have in regard to how we read the Scriptures, why we read the Scriptures, and how we interpret the Scriptures. For example, if someone reads the Bible from the perspective of just wanting to have a blessed personal life, they will overemphasize everything in the word regarding God's blessing and apply it to themselves. But, they may skirt over some of the conditions of those blessings and vice versa.

If a person reads a book like *Radical* by David Platt, they can easily be moved from a prosperity paradigm or individual paradigm to a mission/discipleship-focused paradigm that emphasizes surrendering all for the urgency of making disciples, just like the original apostles did in the gospels when they left all to follow Jesus.

But, those with a kingdom paradigm (like myself) will filter

the great teachings of this book (*Radical*) so that it fits with the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 which can result in a contemporary application of getting a good education, developing our creativity, and making disciples of marketplace leaders by infiltrating the systems and institutions of this world (which I am sure the author would also make allowances for).

This can fit nicely with the Pauline epistles, which seem to advocate a quiet and slow personal and cultural revolution in and through the mundane in our lives as we do everything unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 5), not just radical experiences like selling all we have and moving to an unreached people group to preach the gospel.

The following are some of my opinions regarding 10 views and their resulting interpretations:

1. The word of faith perspective. Those who have been taught in the tradition of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland and others in the Word of Faith movement (which started in the 1950s and gained great popularity in the 1970s) read everything in Scripture with the lens of using their faith to access God's promises and Christ's finished work on Calvary to receive divine healing and prosperity. Because of this, they usually do not study much of the Old Testament except when they refer to passages regarding healing in the Pentateuch (e.g. Exodus 23:25, Psalms 103:1-5, and Proverbs 4:22). They read the New Testament to see who they are or what they have "in Christ."

Thus, it is an individualistic, rights-centered approach to Scripture that is very weak on the corporate nature of vision, purpose and prosperity. Also, this perspective lacks a biblical worldview when it comes to the application of the Old Testament law of God to civil society. In spite of its weaknesses, this perspective can still be effective when it comes to learning how to believe God for the miraculous!

2. The Liberation perspective. Liberation theologians and their adherents emphasize the suffering of Christ because they read the Scriptures generally through the lens of class warfare, prejudice and victimology! Thus, the sufferings and cross of Christ (who was crucified by the majority culture) become a model for all suffering, oppressed people who believe Jesus has come primarily to give them economic and political liberty from their oppressors. The challenge regarding this view is its potential to reduce Christology to anthropology and Christianity to a mere geo/political/economic liberation movement.

3. The perspective of self-empowerment. In the past two decades we have seen the incredible rise of motivational speakers (e.g., Tony Robbins). Many preachers have used this perspective in their preaching. The result is that many sermons are based on the practical issues of the Bible related to hard work, faith, focus, understanding our unique gifts and calling, and how we are made in the image of God to do great works like God.

The challenge with this perspective is the lack of balance: proponents often do not balance their message with other passages related to Jesus' teachings on self-denial, suffering, taking up the cross, and forsaking everything to follow Him! Scripture teaches us that before we can save our lives we have to lose them (Mark 8:35)! Also, the emphasis in Scripture on long-lasting blessing is tied to personal transformation through holiness, humility and dependence on God—not self-empowerment through confidence in our own natural abilities, even if they are given by God.

4. The pietistic perspective. The perspective of the pietist lends itself to searching the Scriptures primarily to bring inner transformation and a personal closeness to Christ. Holiness, walking in the Spirit, hearing the voice of the Lord, and denying ourselves are all emphasized (which is great and all true and absolutely necessary)! The weakness of this

perspective is that believers can become so contemplative and self-focused on their own emotional and spiritual transformation that they can neglect the proper emphasis Christ gave us when He called us to go to all the world to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-18) and transform culture as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).

5. The evangelistic missional perspective. This perspective is all about winning souls and making disciples. Anything done by a church or believer that does not directly lead to converting and maturing people in Christ is jettisoned or viewed as unnecessary and lukewarm. The weakness of this view is its tendency to be one-generational and not practical enough for the everyday lives of growing families.

Also, it is not always conducive for those who have a long-term goal of producing wealth for the kingdom, and who want to put their children through the best universities for cultural credibility and access. There is also a possible lack of emphasis in regards to empowering influential marketplace leaders called to infiltrate the systems of the world (e.g., like the prophet Daniel).

6. The Reformed perspective. Those trained in the Reformed system of interpretation will read the Bible deductively through the lens of the sovereignty of God. Although I resonate much with this system, I have also seen some go to extremes and become passive in regards to fasting and prayer related to winning souls, and extending God's mission and kingdom on the earth, since some proponents of this perspective de-emphasize human responsibility more than Scripture does.

7. The free will perspective. On the opposite extreme from the Reformed (Calvinist) perspective is a free will (Arminian) perspective that overemphasizes human responsibility to the extent that God's sovereignty is sometimes compromised. This leads to superficially interpreting difficult passages

regarding divine calling and election (e.g., Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4) by replacing predestination with foreknowledge (Calvinists don't really separate the two) so that God chooses someone based on Him already knowing that person would (of their own free choice) choose Him in the first place. Also, an overemphasis on free will leads to process theology and open theism, which teaches that God doesn't really know everything in the future because much of it is unknowable.

This extreme emphasis on free will makes it very hard to trust in the relevance of Scripture since, if God is still learning and growing as the future unfolds, it makes it extremely difficult to have a biblical worldview in economics, science, politics, law, ethics, morality, family and sexual orientation because of the inability to have trans-historical universal principles that we can trust! Also, if God is not sovereign then humankind is semi-autonomous which historically has flung open the doors to liberalism.

8. The kingdom perspective. The kingdom perspective interprets much of Scripture and biblical themes as emanating out of the original cultural commission as found in Genesis 1:27-28. The primary theme of the New Testament is not the church, soul winning or even discipleship; it is the kingdom of God, which is the rule of God over all creation.

This perspective motivates people to understand the sacred calling they have in regards to stewarding their God-given gifts and abilities to serve with excellence in the marketplace. Discipleship in this perspective does not just involve the teaching of individual sinners but the discipleship of whole nations in accordance with their interpretation of Matthew 28:19. They believe that the gospel is holistic and should not only redeem sinners but also transform the systems of culture (politics, economics, art, law, ethics, music, family, education, science, etc.)

The challenge for this perspective is the tendency to think we

are doing God's kingdom work just by improving the quality of life in our communities, even if we are not winning souls and making disciples.

9. The individualistic perspective. This is a common perspective that can arise out of our national culture (e.g., rugged American individualism as personified in our iconic action heroes like John Wayne and Rambo). The weakness of this perspective is that much of the Bible was written either to the nation of Israel (Old Testament) or the body of Christ (New Testament). Thus, we cannot fulfill our destiny and accomplish our mission in life merely by ourselves; we need to submit to a local church and function in the corporate context of Scripture if we want to reap the fullness of the blessings of the promises of Scripture.

10. The ecclesial perspective. Those with this perspective think that the church is the kingdom of God, that we are not called to infiltrate and disciple the nations of the world with the gospel but that we are to focus on building our own subcultures within our congregations. Those with this view have a great understanding of the corporate nature of Scripture. But many in this camp fail to understand how the church should be sent into the world as salt and light.

In this view the church is to function as heaven on earth (which I agree with). But I believe they fail to understand the breadth of the mission of the church to bring God's kingdom and will *on earth* as it is in heaven (Luke 11:2-4).

In conclusion, there are many more perspectives I could have mentioned. For the sake of time, I have only mentioned ten of the main perspectives I have seen influencing the people of God today in the global church. As stated earlier, these are only based on my observations and, because of this, it is limited by my own perspective and experience.

I also realize that articles of this sort merely paint

pictures with a broad brush and miss the nuances and overlap of many of these perspectives. My prayer is that we will try to be more open as to the interpretive system we bring to the table based on our perspectives, and that we ask God to help us see what ways we may be limiting our capacity to interpret the Word based on the biblical authors' original intent as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

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Fit Body, Fit Brain: The Key to Keeping Your Mind Young

One of my favorite verses to share in my fitness books and at speaking engagements is 1 Thessalonians 5:23:

*"Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole **spirit and soul and body** be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again" (NLT, emphasis mine).*

I love it because it makes unequivocally clear that the well-being of every part of us—not just our souls—is important to God. While it's true that only our spirit and soul (comprising our mind, will, and emotions) are eternal entities, our body is what carries them through our time on earth, literally

providing the hands and feet by which we serve and impact the world. These facts should greatly motivate us to take care of ourselves the way Paul instructs us to in 1 Corinthians 6:19, as precious temples of the Holy Spirit.

Many of us know that exercise boasts a plethora of benefits that far exceed simply looking better in your clothes. Not only does working out control your weight, it helps prevent certain ailments such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers, and arthritis. It also boosts our mood, increases energy, promotes better sleep, and improves our sex life! But according to recent research, exercise also helps our gray matter stay bright, helping us enjoy an active and fulfilling intellectual life well into old age. For those reading who don't care much about the state of their body, maybe after reading this they'll hit the pavement or grab some weights for the sake of their minds.

In the latest volume of the brain function journal *NeuroImage*, a fascinating new study showed a *distinct relationship between brain activity and physical fitness* in a group of older Japanese men, between the ages of 64 and 75. The study found that the fitter men performed better mentally than the less fit men by using parts of their brains in the same ways they did when they were young.

Did you know that when we age, we use different parts of our brain than we did in our younger years? For example, when we're young, mental tasks involving short-term memory, understanding words' meaning, and recognizing events, people, and objects are performed primarily by the left side of our prefrontal cortex (PFC). When we're older, we begin using the equivalent parts of the PFC on the right side of our brain for the same tasks. This phenomenon has been cleverly coined "HAROLD," which stands for hemispheric asymmetry reduction in older adults, and reflects the reorganization of the brain.

Why does the brain reorganize itself, you may ask? Because it

needs to compensate for reduced brain capacity and efficiency due to age-related decline. But, as the study showed, fitter people are able to stave off the effects of "HAROLD."

In the *NeuroImage* study, the 60 older men underwent an exercise test to measure their aerobic fitness. The men, whose physical fitness varied widely, then performed a test to measure their selective attention, executive function, and reaction time. You might be familiar with this test, known as the "color-word matching Stroop test."

In the Stroop test, you're shown words meaning color, such as blue, green, and red, but asked to name the color of the letters rather than read the word itself. This is a lot harder than it sounds. When the color of the letters does not match the word, it takes the brain longer to react. This reaction time is used as a measurement of brain function.

Activity in the PFC region of the men's brains was measured throughout the test using a unique neuroimaging technique called functional near infrared spectroscopy, or fNIRS. In a nutshell, fNIRS measures the changes in color between oxygenated red blood and blue deoxygenated blood and thus indirectly measures brain activity.

The results from these tests were extensively analyzed to explore the associations between aerobic fitness, Stroop reaction time, and brain activity during the Stroop test. As the hypothesis predicted for older adults, during the Stroop test both sides of the PFC were active, with no difference between right and left, verifying the HAROLD phenomenon among this group of men. Previous studies have shown that young adults mainly use the left side of the PFC for this task.

The relationship between brain activity and Stroop reaction time revealed that the men who favored the left side of the PFC while performing the Stroop test had faster reaction times. This tells us that older adults who use the more youth-

like, task-related side of the brain perform better in this test.

Next, the association between aerobic fitness and Stroop reaction time was analyzed. *Without question, the fitter men had shorter reaction times.*

So how do the men do this? Professor Hideaki Soya, who led the study, says “one possible explanation suggested by the research is that the volume and integrity of the white matter in the part of brain that links the two sides declines with age. There is some evidence to support the theory that fitter adults are able to better maintain this white matter than less fit adults, but further study is needed to confirm this theory.”

If you're a woman like me, you may be curious to know whether these results can be applied to your female brain. The results aren't in, but I think it'd be in our best interest to keep our bodies moving. It couldn't hurt.

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 [and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925](#).

For the original article, visit [.](#)

Does God Even Care When We're

Broken?

Sometimes feeling “OK” is the best you’ve felt in a very long time. Your brokenness entraps you because of unchangeable moments that took place in your past.

You’ve yet to let go and find peace amidst the storm of remembrance. You’re hurting. You’re frustrated. You’re in repetitious, unwavering pain. You ask yourself, “Does God even care?”

God does care. He feels our pain, yet sometimes the way he responds to us might not be exactly the way we anticipate. Over the course of my life, I’ll be honest in saying I’ve found myself furious at God on multiple occasions. I’ve yelled at God, cursed at God and even threatened God for not providing what I felt was the best response for my current situation in life.

I’m sure he looked down at me, chuckled a bit and knew that I didn’t really mean what I was saying. I was just upset, and God was patient enough to let me vent to him. He allowed me to use him as a scratching post. He could handle it. That’s the beauty of God; He’s big enough to handle anything I throw at him, but wise enough to not give me everything I ask for.

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 among our brokenness is a beautifully painful but spiritually deepening experience. Every time we put our trust in God, another scoop of our fleshly dirt is removed from our spiritual sandbox.

Trust God among your brokenness, but realize it's OK to be mad at him, frustrated and even downright confused. God doesn't expect us to understand everything he does, but he does expect us to trust him among the process.

Don't be afraid to question what's happening. Don't be afraid to wave your fist a little.

God can handle it. Let it all out, and get honest with God about what you're really feeling.

Jarrid Wilson is a husband, pastor and author relentlessly sharing the love of Jesus. For the original article, visit [.](#)

Discernment, Deception and One Prayer We Should All Say

As I travel the nation teaching spiritual warfare principles, one truth becomes painfully clear: the body of Christ, at large, lacks discernment.

The reality is many have simply not been activated or trained to discern spirits. Yet discernment is a vital gift in this hour as false prophets, false teachers and even false christs are rising around the world with smooth sayings, rhymes and riddles.

Discerning of spirits is one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. It is the Holy Spirit-inspired ability to distinguish between the operations of the Holy Spirit, a demon spirit or the human spirit. Discerning of spirits is especially helpful in prophecy, when we need to test the spirits to see if they are God (1 John

4:1). It's also vital in spiritual warfare so that we accurately determine what we're battling instead of just beating the air through guessing games (1 Cor. 9:26).

Do We All Have Discernment?

Although the Holy Spirit distributes His gifts as He wills—and some people clearly operate in the gift of discerning of spirits at a high level—I believe all Christians should desire to grow in discernment. With apostasy rising and the Great Falling Away underway, we need to lean into Holy Ghost discernment now more than ever.

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If the Holy Spirit lives on the inside of you—and if you are saved He does—you have access to the discernment as a partaker of Christ's divine nature. All believers can tap into all things pertaining to life and godliness, including Holy Ghost discernment. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would lead us and guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

Beyond the supernatural gift of discerning of spirits, even unbelievers can walk in some measure of discernment—how much more a child of God who is filled with the Holy Ghost and prays in tongues? At its most basic level, discerning simply means to show insight and understanding. Some have a discerning eye for art. Others have a discerning palate for food. We need to develop a discerning spirit that safeguards us from deception in this hour.

Discerning God's Spirit

With that said, I've discerned two troubling ditches in the church world. In one ditch you have those who always see a devil behind every doorknob. They see devils where there are no devils and make false accusations based on soulless imaginations and presumption. Presumption in the Bible usually

leads to death—and presumption kills discernment.

In the other ditch are those who cannot discern any spirits in their midst, even the Spirit of God. Oh, I forgot those who believe evil spirits talking to them are God and think God speaking to them is an evil spirit. Those in this ditch don't rightly discern Jesus. We see this in Matthew 14. Jesus commanded His disciples to get into a boat and go ahead of Him to the other side.

“During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a spirit.’ And they cried out in fear” (Matt. 14:25-26). Some translations say, “it is a ghost.” Later, we see two disciples going to a village called Emmaus. Jesus showed up on the scene and started walking with them, but they didn't discern it was the risen Christ (Luke 24).

How Do We Develop Discernment?

Even if you don't operate in the gift of discerning of spirits, you can still develop discernment. The Word of God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). So if you stay in the Word, your discernment will grow.

We can also practice discernment, asking those more experienced or mature to judge our discerning. The writer of Hebrews said, “Everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby. But solid food belongs to those who are mature, for those who through practice have powers of discernment that are trained to distinguish good from evil” (Heb. 5:13-14).

Walking in love will help you keep a discerning heart. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul prayed that their love would abound more and more, with all knowledge and discernment, so that they could approve what is excellent (Phil. 1:9-10). When

we walk in love, we are walking close to God and we will grow in discernment. This should be a prayer we all pray for ourselves and those we run with.

The Bible warns over and over and over again not to be deceived. In fact, the Bible commands us not to be deceived. Jesus prophesied false prophets and false christs would rise and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect (Matt. 24:24). It's possible for any of us to be deceived but if we ask God for discernment, if we stay prayerful, if we walk in love, if we are students of the Word and if we practice discernment, we can be among the truth bearers in our generation who help set the captives free.