

Raising a Boy: What a Difference 30 Years Makes

My son turned on November 1. The age of 10 is one of the greatest years in a young boy's life.

There's something about going from single digits to double digits makes you stick your chest out a little. You start asking about using deodorant and shaving and all those things you see your dad doing.

For me, that happened 30 years ago. Seeing my son as a soon-to-be 10-year-old brings back those memories, but also has me looking at it from a different perspective—the perspective of a dad. Things are different now.

Here is a comparison between raising a boy in 1985 versus now, plus three key things we must do:

We still love robots, but cartoons are no longer just cartoons. One of the top 10 toys for boys in 1985 was a Transformer. One of the top 10 toys for boys in 2015 ... Transformers. I remember playing with Transformers and watching the cartoon. It was all pretty innocent.

Today, our boys can still play with Transformers and watch the cartoons on streaming video services. They can also watch a full feature film. The challenge we face now is these full feature films aren't necessarily created with young boys in mind. The violence is graphically shown at a level I never saw watching the cartoons in 1985. In addition, the sexual images of women dressed in revealing clothing is alarming and desensitizes our boys. I believe it can open the door to problems with pornography in the future.

We still love sports, but it's not always for fun. Wow. The year 1985 was one of the greatest years for me as a boy who

loved sports. Michael Jordan had just finished his rookie season of a career which would later lead many to call him the greatest basketball player of all time. My all-time favorite baseball team, the St. Louis Cardinals, would play the Kansas City Royals in the World Series. This year, the St. Louis Cardinals and the Kansas City Royals were two of the best teams throughout baseball's regular season, and Kansas City won the World Series again.

I played both little league baseball and basketball and absolutely loved sports. My boys are the same today. They love sports and play them all the time. However, youth sports in 2015 aren't the same carefree, play-for-fun type of youth sports I played in 1985. Everything seems to be organized, and it seems more like business than fun games.

Almost every sport offers travel, club ball or year-round opportunities. Kids are being trained exclusively in one sport by professional trainers. Most parks and neighborhood courts are empty because most kids play in a league, for a team or are at a facility with a parent or coach being trained.

As dads, we have to guard this special season in our boys' lives even from the things we love and they love. Yes, it's important for us to show our kids how to enjoy and appreciate sports, but keep it fun, not succumbing to the "business" that exists in the youth sports world today.

We still start noticing differences in girls, but gender relations are a lot different today. I really don't remember distinguishing that many differences between boys and girls I was friends with prior to age 10. Yes, we went to different bathrooms, and most of the girls didn't play the same games or with the same toys we did. But right around 10, things began to change.

Today noticing these differences begins much younger. What most viewed in 1985 as very inappropriate dress and conduct by

both men and women is very acceptable today. This is an area where we have to be very intentional and not passive. My philosophy is that I want my kids to hear it from me or my wife first before hearing it anywhere else.

Conversations about the “birds and the bees” must happen, and they must happen earlier than they did while raising boys in 1985. We are inundated with messages and ideals almost 24/7 about anywhere we turn. Be proactive in all areas but especially in this area.

If you are raising boys today, there are many things you may have experienced, but some of this is new territory for us. Be intentional as a dad of sons. I encourage you to embrace it and attack it head on. Your sons need you.

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For the original article, visit .

Christian Anger Management: The Right Way to Control Your Emotions

In the comments on my blog, I've read that some of you are struggling with anger issues. So, I feel led to write about Biblical solutions for that.

Anger occurs when you feel like your rights have been violated, your expectations have not been met, or you are outraged about an injustice that involves others.

Even God the Father and Jesus expressed anger.

However, many women don't feel comfortable dealing with that emotion; instead they keep their mouths closed while seething inside. But keeping anger inside is like a pot on the stove set to boil. Just like that pot will eventually boil over, so does the woman.

And, too often, it's the people closest to them that get burned!

While anger itself is not a sin, there are godly and ungodly ways to deal with it. In this article, I'll cover some principles of Christian anger management. First, let's look at what Jesus says about anger:

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:21-23).

Jesus tells us that before anger is expressed outwardly, it started in that person's heart inwardly. As I read this passage, I saw something I've never seen before.

When you add a 'd' in front of the word 'anger', what do you get? Danger! Jesus used the word "danger" 3 times in his description of the consequences of anger.

He even prioritized pursuing peace with others above bringing a sacrifice to God! Mark 11:25 makes it even clearer:

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

With this background, let’s look at the story of brothers Cain and Abel, the first instance of a person’s anger in the Bible (see Genesis 4:3-8). In this case, lack of anger management had deadly consequences:

“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. So the Lord said to Cain,

‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.’ Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”

From Jesus’ words, we know that anger begins in the heart. So the murder of Abel was conceived in Cain’s heart.

Here are the facts:

1. Cain brought an offering to the Lord.
2. Abel brought an offering to the Lord.
3. God respected Abel and his offering.
4. God did not respect Cain and his offering.
5. Cain became angry.
6. The Lord asked Cain why he was angry, then gave him

instructions as to how he could gain the Lord's respect.

7. Cain talked with Abel. Time passed and Cain killed Abel.

Cain was angry at God. Did his anger have a cause? No, it did not. So when you are angry, you should always ask yourself "Why am I angry?" to determine if you have a legitimate cause for it.

Many of our negative emotions are birthed in lying thoughts. Cain apparently felt that God had wronged him because He did not respect him and his offering. But the Lord's question "Why are you angry" tells us that there was no cause for Cain's anger.

The Lord told Cain that if he did well, he would have been accepted. Cain did not respond to God's instruction. That tells me that Cain had a prideful heart and was not teachable. It appears he was not bringing an offering to the Lord out of love; rather it seems he was just going through the motions, perhaps because of his parent's expectations or he was just doing it because Abel did.

If Cain had been humble and was concerned with pleasing God, he would have asked Him: "Lord, what do you mean 'if I do well'? What am I doing wrong? How can I do better?"

I believe that if Cain had a sincere heart to please God, then God would have answered these questions.

Instead, God told Cain that sin was crouching at the door. Sounds like danger to me! However, the Lord also said that Cain should rule over it. Rule means 'to take authority.' The Lord would not have told Cain to do something that Cain did not have the ability to do.

This is an important principle. We have the power to take authority over anger. Too often, we let anger get out of control because it feels good to our flesh to do so. But as

Christians, that is no longer an option because we are submitted to Jesus' lordship.

Our heart should always be set on peace—peace with God, peace with ourselves, and peace with our fellow man as we are in position to make it.

In Cain's case, he did not rule over sin in his heart – the desire to murder. Because he could not take his anger out on God, he took it out on Abel. Abel did nothing wrong.

Cain expressed his anger outwardly and danger was the result. He ended up a marked man, separated from God and receiving judgment.

Cain is an example of how not to manage anger. Let's look at advice from Psalm 4:4 for advice on how to manage anger.

“Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.”

Here are some points to keep in mind:

1. **Be angry ...** It is OK to feel the emotion of anger, however always assess it to discover if there is a cause. If you are angry and can't identify a reason for it, consider it an attack from the enemy. Submit your feelings to God in prayer or even write Him a letter about it. Ask God to open up your spiritual eyes so that you can see the truth of what is happening. Believe that you have God's peace within and pursue that peace rather than indulging your flesh through unwarranted anger.

2. **... and do not sin.** If your anger has a cause, then ask yourself ...“How have my expectations not been met” or “how do I feel my rights have been violated?” If the anger comes from unmet expectations, were your expectations reasonable? Did this person have the ability, knowledge, or will to meet your

expectations?

Sometimes people can have expectations, but the other person has no idea that you had them. You were expecting them to read your mind! Make sure that the other person is at least aware of your expectations if you have them. Otherwise, it is not fair for you to expect something of them that you never bothered to tell them about.

If they lack knowledge about how to meet your expectations, could you supply the knowledge to assist them? If they lack the will, then you have a decision to make. Depending on the relationship, you may decide to limit your association with them or lower your expectations.

Were your rights violated? If you are in a place to do so, be assertive with the other person and state the facts about what happened and then set boundaries regarding the expected behavior.

Once again, your goal is to make peace so that a spirit of offense will not take hold. You don't want to act in a way that will be a stumbling block to someone else coming to the Lord.

Finally, if you are angry about an injustice that doesn't involve you directly, then pray for the situation for God's justice to manifest. Then pray to ask the Lord if there is anything you can do personally about the situation and for Him to give you the courage and/or resources to take action.

3. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah. Make it a regular practice to take your thoughts captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ. That way, when situations happen that can spark your anger, it will be second nature to shift your thinking to those things that are acceptable to the Lord according to Philippians 4:8:

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things

are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

Take moments in your day to just “Be still and know that He is God.” If you are always running around and don’t stop to catch your breath, then the life’s pressures can make you short-tempered and more prone to use anger as a release valve.

4. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord.” You are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Even though it is tempting to let your flesh have its way, act in accordance with your true identity and put your flesh on the altar:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2).”

Trust that if justice must be meted out, God will vindicate you:

“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

The way to give place to wrath is to bring it under the Lord’s authority in prayer. Let Him give you wisdom as to how to deal with your anger in a way that pleases Him.

Only then can you experience His peace, which surpasses all understanding. His peace will guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

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For the original article, visit .

God's Mysterious Ways: Only Part of His Beauty

God is too big for us to completely understand but is personal enough for us to enjoy a relationship with Him. Isn't that wonderful?

The nation, the earth and the universe itself are all a small facet of God's divine dominion. While we spend our lives on this tiny ball of dirt known as Earth, I cannot begin to imagine the galaxies and far away places we have yet to discover, all of which were created by the hands of God—beautiful, magnificent places.

I've never met anyone who knew everything there is to know about God. I've never met anyone who could fully comprehend the majesty of God's being. And, I've never met anyone who could truly wrap their brains around complexity of *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*.

God is too big for us to fully know, and to me that is exhilarating to say the least. How mundane would life be if our faith was put in the hands of someone we could know everything about.

I don't know why God chooses to heal some but let the course

of life define others. I don't know why God allows bad things to happen to good people, or why bad people are allowed to thrive amidst their terrible deeds and actions. I don't know why God does or doesn't do a lot of things, but that doesn't mean I don't trust Him and place my life in His control.

There is an unclear beauty of God's being that keeps me yearning to know Him that much more. There is a light in the distance that calls upon my soul. And while some people might look at God's grandeur as intimidating and too big to know personally, I see it as an adventure that keeps me coming back for more.

"For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding" (Psalm 47:7, MEV). God, the creator of you and I is on our side. He loves us fervently, forgives us continuously and created us intentionally. We don't know everything there is to know about God, but that's part of the beauty.

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

I Should Be Burning in Hell, But ...

I should be burning in hell.

Not because I'm denying Jesus' grace and the wondrous works of the cross. I know that I am saved only by grace according to Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one should boast" (MEV).

No, I am talking about timing—God’s timing. Unlike we humans, God isn’t quick to take vengeance upon those who disobey Him and His Word. While our flesh wants swift justice, God, much to our benefit, will wait on our repentance. “The Lord is slow to anger and great in power ...” (Nahum 1:3, MEV).

I am well aware of the fact that there have been a couple of times during my life that God’s grace has saved me from death. I remember two specific incidents while driving that it was only by His grace that I didn’t end up on a slab in the morgue.

One of those incidents came when I had yet to accept Jesus and lived a life of wretched sin. The other came after my “supposed” salvation, but yet I hadn’t fully surrendered my life to Jesus. You know the verse—“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10, MEV). Somewhere, one of those adjectives had to describe me.

So, why me? Why have others died in car accidents and yet God decided to spare me in those moments? I can only assume it is because He had greater plans for me—which I believe I’m presently carrying out—and that He had delayed His anger for my disobedience. Or, it could be a promise He made to my praying mother.

Just as I am grateful for the grace of the cross, I am also grateful for God’s delayed anger.

But don’t take God’s grace—or his delayed anger—as a license to continue to wallow in sin. Just as he eventually destroyed Nineveh in 612 B.C. (after the inhabitants of the city fell back into immorality), His justice on this earth eventually will be carried out. God will not allow sin to go unchecked

forever. You can rest assured of that.

When people wonder why God doesn't punish evil immediately, help them remember that if He did, none of us would be here. We can all be thankful that God gives people time to turn to Him. And believe me, we've all had plenty of time.

I implore you. Won't you surrender your life to Him and His Word completely today?

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

Have Your Kids Cracked Your Code?

A dad named Travis was headed to the grocery store with two of his children tagging along. His six-year-old, Alex, asked him, "Dad, how come you always go to two different stores to buy food?"

"I don't know," Travis answered.

There was a bit of a pause, and then Alex said, "Katie says that when you say, 'I don't know,' it means you're not really listening."

In the same monotone, Travis replied, "Huh? Oh, yeah ... really?"

Travis gave his kids plenty more lackluster, noncommittal answers during that shopping trip.

It wasn't until later that night he realized what had happened, and it stunned him. His kids had cracked his

code! He had grown accustomed to giving his kids instant and easy non-answers that actually meant he wasn't listening or didn't want to make the effort to think about an answer. The stunning truth was that Travis relied on the code quite a bit, and his kids knew all about it!

Now, we all know that sometimes a six-year-old—or a sixteen-year-old for that matter—will go on and on about something that doesn't really matter. It's just chatter; sometimes it's nonsense. But you should also know that how we listen conveys much to our children. Caring about what they're telling us demonstrates that we care for *them*.

So let's take a moment to do some quick self-diagnosis:

- Are you available to your kids? Do you want to be? How would your kids answer?
- When you're alone with them—in the car, at bedtime, whenever—do they ask questions? Or have they given up because you're not listening anyway?
- Do they come to you with their child-size problems? Or have they stopped because they know you're too distracted to help?
- Finally, later on, when they have some real challenges in life, will they come to you for wisdom and advice? Or will they simply choose to make those decisions on their own?

I guess that last question is rhetorical, but all four of these should be important reminders for us.

Dad, whatever age your kids are, listening is a skill you need to master right now. I challenge you to focus on every word from every family member for the next week.

Action Points

- Look your kids in the eyes, pay attention to nonverbal cues, and really listen to what they're saying and their

tone of voice. (And of course, when necessary, give a thoughtful answer.)

- When your child asks a question, engage him in conversation and keep talking until he learns something from you and you learn something from him.

Have your kids cracked your codes? They are pretty smart, so don't be surprised if they have. Besides, that means they're listening to you. And isn't that what family members do?

What are your secrets to good listening with your kids? Please help other dads by leaving a comment either below or at our Facebook page.

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For the original article, visit .

The Season Is Here: Preventing and Treating Colds and Flu

Now that the colder weather is upon us, so is the cold and flu season. As it turns out, the cold weather isn't what causes us to become ill, it is instead the lowered immune response that comes with this time of year.

In other words, there are an equal number of viruses lurking around in the summer as in the winter. The difference is, in the summer our body's immune system is stronger, and

therefore fights off the viruses, whereas in the winter, our body's immune system is weaker and we succumb to the viruses.

The good news is we can change that.

Vitamin D: One of the main immune boosters is Vitamin D, which comes from the sun. Obviously, most of us get more sun exposure in the summer than in the winter. Therefore, with the lack of Vitamin D in the winter, our immune systems are compromised. To remedy this, simply take a Vitamin D supplement and/or spend some time each day in front of a "Happy Light," such as the one made by Verilux, which is used to treat Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as "SAD," a type of depression that is caused by lack of sunlight.

Stress: Another thing that causes our immune system to weaken, and increases the likelihood of catching a cold or the flu is stress. Most of us experience greater stress in the winter months as the holidays can be emotionally challenging, as can the isolation and depression that can carry into January and beyond. Reducing stress is one of the best things we can do for our overall health, yet one of the most difficult. Exercise, sleep and prayer are some of the best ways to reduce stress.

Sugar: Believe it or not, eating sugar weakens our immune system. Starting with Halloween, most of us tend to eat more sugar in the winter months than in summer. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Super Bowl and Valentine's Day are all major sugar events. Cutting back on sugar intake is a way to help prevent colds and the flu.

Sleep: Getting adequate sleep is a key factor in maintaining a strong immune system. During the winter months and holidays, many of us find that we are overloaded with responsibilities from family, work and school that keep us from getting enough rest. This severely reduces our body's ability to fight attacking viruses.

Proper diet can greatly increase our body's immune system.

Coconut oil: Coconut oil kills viruses. This amazing fact is often overshadowed by the brain-boosting components of coconut oil. But the lauric acid in coconut oil has been proven to destroy viruses such as herpes and even HIV. It also kills many of the "bad" bacteria assaulting our body. Cooking with coconut oil as well as taking a tablespoon or two a day is a great immune-boosting routine.

Clean hands: Doctors say keeping the hands clean is the number one way to prevent illness. When we wash our hands, we should lather for twenty seconds, or about time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Hand washing is best, but if soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer is a suitable substitution. Make sure it contains at least 60 percent alcohol, the more alcohol the better. Rub your hands until the hand sanitizer is dry. Make sure to clean your hands before eating, of course, but also try to keep your dirty fingers out of your mouth, nose, eyes ... and other entrances or "openings" such as open cuts, etc. This takes discipline, especially for those of us with contacts and allergies who are constantly rubbing our eyes.

Vitamin C: Vitamin C is a must for preventing colds and flu. Research shows that it works. Vitamin C supplementation is a great idea, as is eating vegetables high in Vitamin C such as red bell peppers, broccoli, butternut squash and Brussels sprouts. Most of us know citrus fruits are high in Vitamin C, but are also high in sugar, albeit natural, so lower-sugar produce is better.

Probiotic: Take a good probiotic. Probiotics increase the number of "good bacteria" in the gut. Scientists have discovered that about 80 percent of our immune function originates in the gut (intestines) and therefore a healthy gut is paramount to good health. You can also eat probiotic foods, such as fermented foods. The best is the Korean classic,

kimchi, which you can make yourself or purchase at the store. Just make sure it's refrigerated, as the canned variety is pasteurized and the good bacteria have been killed. Other fermented foods include pickles, again, the refrigerated kind, Kefir and yogurt (sugar-free!) with live cultures and refrigerated sauerkraut.

Zinc: Zinc is another immune booster. Many of us are familiar with the product, "Zicam," which is really great at mitigating the symptoms of a cold. It works so well because the active ingredient is Zinc.

Bone broth: Speaking of what to do when you get a cold or flu, consider the time-honored classic, homemade chicken soup. No canned soup! Prepare it with bones. In other words, boil a whole chicken or cut-up chicken with bones, for an extended period of time. The resulting nourishing broth is anti-inflammatory, among other things.

Water: Drink plenty of water. No sugary drinks! Water flushes out the toxins and impurities in the body. Sweating is also a great way to expel toxins from the body, as well as relieve stress, as mentioned above.

Hydrogen peroxide: One of the most interesting ways to relieve the symptoms of a cold and shorten its duration is by pouring a small amount of hydrogen peroxide in each ear! It sounds crazy, but it really works. Hydrogen peroxide is very cheap and can be purchased at any grocery store or pharmacy. Just fill the cap from the bottle and pour it in one ear, keeping your head tilted down for a minute or two, then repeat the process on the other ear.

For the original article, visit .

Bob Jones' 1985 'Kansas City Royals' Prophecy Stirs Hope for Revival

The Kansas City Royals rallied to win the World Series on Sunday, and many in Kansas City and beyond are shouting for joy—even if they are not hardcore baseball fans. That's because they are believing the prophets and hoping to prosper.

Indeed, the win was not only significant because it was the first time in 30 years the Royals took home the championship; it's significant because it fulfills a string of prophecies and stirs hope in the hearts of many contending for revival in Kansas City and America.

Mike Bickle, director of the International House of Prayer in Kansas City (IHOPKC), shares a Bob Jones prophecy in the ministry's prophetic history. He explains that Jones prophesied during the 1985 World Series:

"God, the Holy Spirit is going to create worldwide attention to be focused on Kansas City ... That's the good news. Here's the bad news. The Lord is going to do it through the baseball game.

"It looks like Kansas City is down and out and will never make it and suddenly at 5 till 12 the Lord brings the victory in. That's the spiritual message over this movement breaking forth in this city. When it looks like it is five till twelve and Kansas City is counted out. Suddenly at 5 till 12 the Lord's breaking in victory."

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Later, Jones told Bickle: "I heard it! I heard it out loud. I

heard it in my dream. I heard the voice of the Lord. It spoke resounding. I heard it very clear. The Lord said, 'Eleven is the number because it's the 11th hour victory. It's the 11th hour victory he's going to give Kansas City.'

The 1985 match went down in baseball history as the "Miracle World Series" because it looked hopeless. From the outside looking in, it didn't appear there was any way the Royals were going to pull out a victory. Kansas City was down three games to one and had to win four in a row to take the crown. Thirty years ago, Jones went on to tell Bickle:

"You're going to be counted out many times by people and at 5 till 12, in the 11th hour, the Lord is going to break through and this prayer movement is going to succeed and it's going to get the attention of the entire earth. This is going to happen. You wait and watch the baseball league."

Of course, this was long before IHOPKC was going hard 24/7 with worship and prayer. It was before a generation of youth started contending for revival. And this was before Bob Hartley, founder of Hartley Institute/Deeper Waters Ministry in Kansas City, had six dreams about the drama of the Kansas City Royals. Here's the bottom line of those prophetic encounters:

"Watch the Royals, because after many years of disappointment, the Royal ones are entering into a time of Numbers 27:18-23, where they are being commissioned to enter into the promises. Watch them, as they will win and bring a shift from hopelessness to hope ... This is going to be like 1985. Do you remember what brought them home? ... Hope unseen will get them to first base. Then they will become unburdened and light on their feet. This carefree hope will get them to second base. They will be filled with joy and happily steal third base with childlike hope ... but salvation will come from an unlikely place and 'hope against hope' will bring them home."

And then it happened. The Royals won the World Series in 2015 after a heartbreaking Game 7 loss to San Francisco last year. As the *Associated Press* put it, “For these resilient Royals, no deficit is too large, no time in the game too late.”

At a time when hopeless is striking the heart of America and men’s hearts threaten to fail them for fear of economic meltdowns, plagues, earthquakes and other evil prophetic forebodings, the words of Jones and Hartley are ringing in the ears of believers around the nation believing for a Third Great Awakening.

Could God be speaking words of life and hope—and revival—through a baseball game?

The Way Some Christians Act Breaks My Heart

It’s true. I’m proud to be a Christian, represent Jesus Christ and proclaim the gospel that has forever transposed my life.

But while I’m all “for” Christianity and the progression of the gospel, I can honestly say that the way some Christians act breaks my heart. It’s something that keeps me up at night. This is my struggle.

I’m not really sure what it derives from. Maybe it’s the “*God hates fags*” picket signs being somehow justified by interpretation of biblical text, or the extreme judgment that comes from most self-proclaimed cross bearers when someone in the public eye fails.

Regardless, I have a really hard time liking some Christians.

I sometimes wonder, *“God, why do you allow these people to represent you?”*

I often wonder why pastors choose to bash the failures of public figures and use them as examples for sermon illustrations, or why Christian bloggers think it's okay to spew personalized hatred towards someone for sake of clicks. Or better yet, why some churches find themselves bashing one another all because, *“they're just not like us.”*

I understand we're all entitled to an opinion, but that doesn't mean our opinions have to be shared with cruelty and rashness. It can all be done in love and sincerity. And while I understand that not all Christians have chosen to act this way, a great percentage of them do. It's disheartening. It's a tiny flame that spreads like a wildfire.

- *Don't like the way “that church” worships? That's fine, but don't be cruel and think your church is better because of it.*
- *Your congregation prefers exegetical teaching as opposed to topical? Wonderful, but keep your judgments aside when noticing a church who does things differently. They're reaching a different crowd.*
- *Have you chosen a life that does not include the consumption of alcohol? That's very honorable of you, but don't be arrogant enough to proclaim that someone who drinks alcohol is going to hell.*
- *Don't like tattoos? More power to you, but don't you wave your finger at someone and tell them that they're an abomination to God because of their decision to ink their skin.*
- *Have you chosen to abstain from prescription medication? That's your decision, but keep your judgment of one's true faith if someone who is suffering from depression decides to seek medication from a licensed psychiatrist.*
- *Displeased with the failures of others? You're allowed*

to be. But please don't take to social media and display your judgment and distaste as if you and I are any better. Everybody makes mistakes. That's why Jesus died on the cross.

When I read the Bible, the concept of love and grace is prevalent. But while I see these truths to be as clear as the moon in a cloudless night sky, I guess some see otherwise.

Once again, I'm proud to be a Christian but I cannot say I like the way all of them act. I would be the first to lay down my life for The One who laid down his, but that doesn't mean I won't be honest about my frustration towards some of Jesus' personal advocates. It breaks my heart. It should break yours too.

The image of love-bearing is something we cannot ignore as a followers of Jesus. And regardless of how one may want to justify their ill-thought words and actions, my Bible is pretty clear on the idea of loving.

In fact, depending on what version of the Bible you prefer, the word "love" can be found anywhere between 250 to 550 times. That's impressive. And let's not forget the declaration to love our enemies found in Luke 6:35: "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be the sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil."

Our job as followers of Jesus is to reflect an image of love—the same love that Jesus showcased on a splintered plank of wood known as the cross. I'm not ignorant enough to believe that Christians should be loved by all people—the Bible tells us this wouldn't be the case if we are truly living out our God-given calling.

Without love we are meaningless. Without love we are without Jesus. We must understand that the gospel without love isn't truly The Gospel at all. Jesus himself is the image we must

seek to reflect, and our mission is to love because he first loved us.

We as Christians must learn to exude a consequential image of God's love through every facet of our lives. It has the power to change the world. {eoa}

Jarrid Wilson is a husband, dad, pastor, best-selling author and inspirational blogger. His articles have been viewed by millions, showcased on some of today's hottest talk shows and featured on national news stations worldwide. He is a dynamic speaker whose outside-the-box perspectives have gained him national recognition from some of today's most influential Christian leaders and pastors. His newest book, *Jesus Swagger*, is now available worldwide.

For the original article, visit .

Should You Follow a Gluten-Free Diet?

For those who have been diagnosed as having celiac disease, changing your diet is necessary for the natural healing process to begin.

For those individuals who aren't experiencing symptoms of intolerance of gluten, there may still be a need to remove the foods from the diet.

Celiac Disease: The Difference

Individuals with celiac disease suffer from physical challenges when they eat foods with gluten as well as proteins. The development of issues comes when gluten enters

the smaller intestine. The villi present within the bowels of these people are flattened and their function is ineffective. Medical issues of the following nature may become present: bone loss, vitamin deficiencies, malabsorption issues, weight gains or losses, as well as inflammation diseases. The individuals may also be suffering from intestinal bloat, gastric pain, along with symptoms of diarrhea.

Grain Processing Changed

Over the years, the processing of many grains has changed. This is one contributing factor to more individuals becoming gluten intolerant. In years past, grains were processed through lacto-fermentation. Now, grains are processed using a hybridization process which allows the end product gained to be more fruitful. In many cases, the size of crop gained is twice than in the past.

Dr. J. Axe, a physician of natural medicine, agrees this change is one reason more people are becoming gluten sensitive. He also notes there is a clear connection between the gut and the brain. In other words, a lot of what is going on in our mind is closely related to what is happening in our gut. This can be related to having a good mental status as well as a bad mental status. Inflammation issues in the gut can cause cerebral clarity to be decreased (often termed brain fogging).

Going Gluten Free

For those going gluten free, there are a few things to consider. It is important to stick with only fresh produce and add mainly lean proteins to the diet. Gluten free grains are an option to add to menu plans. The main thing to remember is keeping the diet balanced for the best possible health outcomes.

When looking at gluten-free products on the market, they

aren't all a wise choice. Some are still considered to be "junk foods" and should be limited. Some of the junk food items include various crackers, pretzels, cookies, and the like. So, think before you buy.

Symptomatic Problems

Symptomatic problems can occur when an individual decides to go gluten free.

Withdrawals can occur and cause the body to develop headaches and display intense cravings. Nutritional deficiencies can also become a challenge when moving to consuming no gluten. Weight gain can also be another problem for the individual who is going gluten free. This can be due in part to using gluten free alternatives which may be higher in fat content and calories.

Trudy Scott, a nutrition specialist and writer, explains sensitivity to gluten does create symptoms within the body for many including depressions, phobias, anxieties, irritabilities as well as mood swings. This is primarily due to imbalances within the chemicals of the brain, more than expected in part to gluten intake.

Positive Changes

Positive changes can also occur to those individuals reducing gluten in their daily diets. Once through the transition stage, individuals can experience the following: decreased depression, lessened anxiety, improved digestion, more energy, less bloating, decreased diarrhea, and weight loss. Some people will naturally lose excess weight by eliminating gluten from the diet.

The Alimentary Pharmacology and Therapeutics found there is a relation in some individuals between gluten intake and a change in levels of cortisol as well as serotonin within the

brain. Lower levels of serotonin is being seen in studies after the consumption of wheat. Serotonin is also known as the “happy chemical” in the body as it helps provide great feelings naturally.

Similarly, a decrease in inflammation within the intestines can provide huge positive results for the individual. Gut leakage can be prevented, auto immune issues deterred, and bowel diseases avoided for many simply by removing gluten from the individual’s diet. {eoa}

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For the original article, visit .

What in Your Life Is Worth a Grand Celebration?

Last week I attended the 50th anniversary celebration of my alma mater, Oral Roberts University. And let me tell you, this was indeed a celebration of the rarest and most deserving kind.

This university, built in the middle of a cow pasture in south Tulsa, was a mere baby during the years that I was a student on that hallowed soil from 1973 to 1977.

And then I had the amazing opportunity to be employed at the university as the first women's chaplain from 1977 to 1979. ORU's steps were no longer wobbling with infant uncertainty. But this premiere institution, where academia and Spirit-led living collided, began marching ahead to make a place for itself among the finest Christian universities of this nation.

During the years of working in the chaplain's office at ORU, I was baptized into the realization of what genuine ministry is all about. During those glory years of ORU's second decade, I received my assignment from the Father ... *to minister to women.*

To teach the Word to women. To encourage hurting women. To call women out of their pain into His abundance.

To help the daughters of the King understand exactly who their Dad is. To laugh ... and cry ... listen to ... and bring truth to women.

Last week, ORU alumni gathered from Zambia and from Germany, from California and from Chicago, from Texas and from New York, from Canada and from Mexico to celebrate 50 years of God's faithfulness.

The charge that Oral Roberts heard from God concerning the students who would attend ORU in all of the generations to come was this:

"Raise up your students to hear My voice, to go where My light is dim and where My voice is heard small, and My healing power is not known, even to the uttermost bounds of the earth."

ORU faculty and staff from every era, alumni from around the world, current students and friends of the university joined in the exuberant jubilee and worshipped with reckless abandon.

We worshipped the miracle-working God who is still moving today. We sang until the tears dripped down our cheeks and then we sang some more. We sang the worship songs that were

written by the sons and daughters of the university.

Do you know what I learned during those moments of rare and rich worship?

I learned that it is in the presence of God that a miracle of rejuvenation happens. Worship becomes that magnificent fountain of youth! Everyone, regardless of biological age, is young again when worshipping the God of eternity. Old things are passed away and everything has become new when God is put in His rightful place.

We also listened to the voices of the greatest men and women of the past 50 years who have served God without pause, without fanfare and without the approval of culture.

Do you know what I learned while sitting at the feet of the true generals of the faith?

I learned that we serve a God who is still speaking today. I heard God's voice as a young collegiate on that campus ... and I heard God's voice again last week at 60 years old.

So, what is all of this about? Why should you care about the celebration that happened at 7777 South Lewis, Tulsa, Oklahoma, last week?

I hope that you have experienced something so grand in your life that it deserves a noble celebration. Take the time out of your busy life to celebrate that which has stood the test of time and has challenged you to become the person that you are today.

Celebrate your marriage, celebrate your parents, celebrate dear friendships, celebrate your children and celebrate your faith!

Celebrate your freedom, celebrate your co-workers, celebrate creation. Find something to celebrate and then do it loudly!

Second, I pray that you know the value of worship in your life. Worship loudly. Worship intensely. Worship with tears and with laughter. Sing the songs of your generation, and then worship some more!

You serve a God who is worthy to be celebrated! His faithfulness extends beyond your circumstances and His love is splashed on your life in spite of the number of your years.

Third, listen for the voice of God. God is still speaking today and will continue to speak for all of eternity! God is speaking ... are you listening?

Listen to the voices of those who have gone before you on this journey called "life" and learn to treasure their wisdom and their insight. Listen to the voices of ordinary friends who have loved you through drought and through delight. Listen to the voices of the next generation and learn from their youthful exuberance and enthusiasm.

And finally, go. Go where His light is dim and His voice is heard small. Go to the uttermost bounds of the earth. Go and be a healing agent in someone's life. Go and make a difference either large or small. Just go in the name and power of Jesus.

Celebrate ... worship ... listen ... and go. There is no greater celebration than that. {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.