

In Death, Jason Ray Provided Life to Many

If you are opposed to organ donation, or are indifferent to the concept of having your organs and tissue surgically removed upon your death then transplanted into someone who needs them, talk to Charlotte Ray.

I was blessed to meet this beautiful and brave mother on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This is where her precious son, Jason, proudly served as the UNC mascot eight years ago when he was tragically killed by a car while he was walking on the side of a busy street.

Jason loved (loves) the Lord very much. So while Charlotte's grief is still raw, she is comforted by the belief that she will see her dear child again in heaven.

In fact, it was Jason's faith that was the foundation of a prophetic conversation he had with his mother when he made the decision to become an organ donor.

At the time, organ donation was something to which Charlotte and her husband Emmett were opposed. But watch this video and see how much of an impact Jason's decision made:

Jason donated enough tissue and organs to improve or save the lives of more than 50 people, from burn victims to the visually impaired. ESPN produced a dramatic, moving, 15-minute tribute to Jason and his sacrifice called "Ray Of Hope." In it, a number of the recipients of Jason's organs tell their stories and even meet Charlotte and Emmett Ray.

For example, Ronald Griffin, who was dying of congestive heart failure received Jason's heart. He says, "As long as I breathe and my heart beats, Jason, to a degree, is alive."

Denis Korzelius was given a death sentence one month after his wedding, but was given the gift of life via Jason's liver.

David Irving received one of Jason's kidneys and his pancreas. Antwan Huntger, born with only one kidney that started failing when he was only 15, received Jason's other kidney.

This list goes on and on. Now that video is shown in driver's education classes in schools across the state of North Carolina.

Those who refuse to let Jason's legacy die have created a foundation called the Jason Ray Foundation. The organization is dedicated to encouraging people to become organ donors and to give generously to provide services to people who are involved in the process of donating or receiving.

For the original article, visit .

'You Owe Me Restitution!'

Remember in the cartoon, "The Great Pumpkin," when Sally was "robbed of her tricks and treats?" Angry and hurt, she looked for some payback from Linus.

It's a natural reaction for all of us when we're wronged, isn't it? But it isn't God's way, and it's not what he wants for us.

But sometimes, no matter how trivial the transgression, forgiving someone who has wronged you can be a real test of character.

For example: Despite the perpetrator's lack of remorse, the families of the victims of the nine people murdered by 21-

year-old Dylann Roof in June at Emmanuel African Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, certainly displayed Godly character when they publicly forgave Roof for his heinous crimes.

What about Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers? Do you remember his reaction when he saw them again years later?

Of course there is Jesus, who said while hanging on a Roman cross after suffering much physical pain and humiliation: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34, MEV).

A recent incident challenged my character. Although it wasn't a life-or-death situation like the above examples, it certainly put my own capacity to forgive to the test.

My wife is a member of a local trading post page on Facebook. We had been looking to buy a laptop for a reduced price, and she found one on the page for \$100. My wife made the appropriate contacts, and we decided to meet the person selling it at a local Panera.

We arrived and the young girl seemed pleasant enough. She had turned the laptop on and, with the WiFi at Panera, it appeared as if it were working properly. Although I don't know much about computers, I thought I had checked it out thoroughly enough. I questioned how old it was, and the girl said it was two years old. She said she had only used it to write college papers. She was selling it because she had gotten another one for a graduation present.

When I brought the laptop home, however, I began to notice that it had numerous errors. For some reason, the browser wouldn't stay connected. I tried to work with it for more than an hour, but to no avail.

In front of my family, I became angry and frustrated. I wanted

restitution. I gave into my flesh and began maligning the young woman's character. And, yes, I even cursed. Lord God, I beg your forgiveness.

However, I cannot blame anyone but myself for not being more thorough. I failed miserably at caveat emptor.

After sleeping a few hours, Jesus—as He often does—woke me up and seared my heart. He told me I needed to show the young woman grace, although she may have little or no remorse for her actions. After all, “For if you forgive men for their sins, Your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men for their sins, neither will your Father forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15, MEV).

Praise God, the Lord has forgiven me for transgressions of which I have repented.

“Lord, I ask You now to forgive this young woman and turn her heart to You. Let her seek You and find You. Save her soul. And please forgive me for my un-Christlike words and actions.”

Have you been faced with similar situations? Do you harbor any unforgiveness you need to confess to God?

I pray you rid yourself of such venom. It only hurts you. Believe me, I know.

“For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever” (Psalm 117:2, MEV).

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

10 Critical Things to Teach Your Daughter

Dad, you're an influential person in your daughter's life. Make sure you teach her the most important things that she needs to know before she grows up.

Teach your daughter to love herself. Teach your daughter to change her oil. Teach your daughter respect. See what else you can learn in this week's Tools for the Journey: Things to Teach Your Daughter.

Dad, what would you add to the list? Or how do you teach these things?

1. Teach her that she's beautiful. You know that your daughter is beautiful inside and out. Make sure she knows it, too.

2. Teach her to be kind. Teach your daughter to not only be kind to others, but to herself as well.

3. Teach her to respect herself and others. You can teach her to respect herself and others through modeling what it looks like. Let her know that respect will take her far in life and allow her to build strong relationships.

4. Teach her honesty. Make sure that you are honest with your daughter so that she knows that trust feels like. She will then grow to want others to have that same feeling for her.

5. Teach her maintenance skills. Teach her simple car maintenance; where the fuse box is, how to turn the water main off. Give her a little independence and confidence when it comes to getting her hands dirty.

6. Teach her to stand up for what she believes in. Teach her to stand up for her beliefs, but also how to do so appropriately and without hurting others. It is also important

to help her realize that picking her battles will be in her favor.

7. Teach her what to look for in relationships. Model what a healthy relationship looks like. Respecting her mother, married or not, will have a large impact on your daughter's life.

8. Teach her to love learning. Show respect for teachers and place school as a high priority in your home. Reward her when she does well and encourage her when she can do better.

9. Teach her to love herself. Your words are powerful. They have the power to shape the way our daughter sees herself; use them wisely.

10. Teach her that she can make a difference. She has valuable gifts and abilities that can help people make the world a better place.

For the original article, visit .

What is Making Older Adults' Brains Age Faster?

According to a study conducted by researchers from Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School in Singapore, elderly people who sleep less show evidence of rapid decline in their cognitive performance. These findings may act as a foundation for upcoming work, related to less sleep and cognitive decline and brain diseases such as dementia.

Numerous research conducted in the past has also analyzed the effect that the length of sleep has on memory performance.

Although faster brain ventricle enlargement is regarded as a marker in cognitive drop and other brain ailments like Alzheimer's disease and dementia, the effect of sleep duration has never been inspected on this specific marker.

The Details of the Study

The Singapore-Longitudinal Aging Brain Study was started in 2005 and the findings of this study were published in the journal *SLEEP*. This is one of those few studies in Asia that examined the brain structures and cognitive functions of elderly people very precisely. The researchers took into account the records of approximately 66 healthy older Chinese people aged 55 years and above.

During the course of the study, the elderly people undertook structural MRI brain scans after every two years for the measurement of neuropsychological assessments and brain volume in order to test their cognitive functions. Moreover, a questionnaire was conducted to check the sleeping hours of each participant. It was found that participants who slept for lesser hours revealed signs of faster ventricle enlargement and drops in cognitive performance.

Dr. June Lo, the lead author and a fellow Duke-NUS Researcher, stated that the results of their research link short sleep duration to a marker of brain aging. Professor Michael Chee, Director of the Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience at Duke-NUS and senior author further added that the research conducted by Lumosity, an online brain-training program has indicated that seven hours of sleep a day for elderly people seems to be effective for ideal performance on computer based cognitive tests.

The result of this research was conducted on about 150,000 elderly people. However, at present, it is still not clear if the seven hours of sleep is enough for maintaining the brain's health. Professor Chee asserted that in coming years, they

plan to find out what is good for lasting brain and cardio-metabolic health as well.

Don Colbert, M.D. has been board-certified in Family Practice for over 25 years and practices Anti-aging and Integrative medicine. He is a New York Times Bestselling author of books such as The Bible Cure Series, What Would Jesus Eat, Deadly Emotions, What You Don't Know May be Killing You, and many more with over 10 million books sold. He is the Medical Director of the Divine Health Wellness Center in Orlando, Florida where he has treated over 50,000 patients.

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Average American Diet: Lacking in Vitamins and Minerals

Even if you are a normal weight and think you take pretty good care of yourself, chances are you are lacking in at least one critical vitamin or mineral necessary for good health. It's called micronutrient deficiency, and it's a new health issue caused by modern living.

Our food supply has deteriorated in quality. The main culprit is processed food, such as packaged and fast food. Because it is cheap, convenient and tasty, it is taking over the American diet. Unfortunately, processed food is sorely lacking in micronutrients.

But it doesn't stop there. Even whole foods such as fresh vegetables, meats, and fish are lacking the micronutrients

they once contained.

Many of us remember the way vegetables used to taste. They were full of flavor, highly recognizable and unique to that particular vegetable. Today's veggies, compared to those from decades past, have little taste.

What comes to my mind is tomatoes. I remember as a child, a fresh-from-the-farm tomato was one of my favorite foods! Sprinkle a bit of salt on it, and it was delicious. Now however, those things in the store that are called tomatoes barely even resemble what they once were. They are hard and tasteless. Turns out, they also no longer have the nutrition they once did. Sadly, much of our produce is that way. For instance, apples contain 77 percent fewer minerals than they did 80 years ago.

The major reason for this change is over-farming, which robs the soil of precious micronutrients that used to be absorbed into the food. Also, shipping produce long distances adds to the problem. Picking it too soon and exposing it to light, heat, and air for a long time, all take away micronutrients. Furthermore, many industrial farms overwater their crops, creating larger, more profitable fruits or vegetables, which are lacking in nutrition.

As discouraging as this sounds, the best way to mitigate micronutrient deficiency in produce is to buy from local farmers.

Dr. Jayson Calton and his wife Mira, a certified nutritionist, have dedicated their lives to eradicating micronutrient deficiency, and are the authors of *The Micronutrient Miracle*.

Their mission originated with Mira's osteoporosis diagnosis at the age of 30. Her doctor said she had the bones of an 80-year-old woman! When she started getting the vitamins and minerals her body was craving, she completely reversed her osteoporosis. She said micronutrient is at the root of many

health problems.

“For me it was osteoporosis,” Mira said. “But it’s also things like cancer, it has to do with your high blood pressure, your cholesterol levels, your metabolism, whether or not you sleep well, it has to do with everything, diabetes, and it also has a lot to do with obesity.”

Topping the list of micronutrients most people are lacking are potassium, calcium, magnesium and vitamins A, D and E.

In addition to fresh produce, fresh meat is also lacking the vital micronutrients it once contained. This is because of the ravages of factory farming. Most animals raised on factory farms never see the light of day and are fed unnatural, unhealthy grains or worse.

Jayson says, “They’re being fed up to seven pounds a day of stale candy and chocolate bars that these candy manufacturers are throwing at these farmers and saying, ‘Hey, fatten up the cattle with this. It will spike their insulin, you’ll get more marbling in the meat, you’ll be able to sell the meat and it will taste better,’” he said. “This is just, to me, an abomination.”

A much healthier alternative to factory farmed beef is grass-fed beef.

“Now what’s going to happen when the animal is out in the sunshine, absorbing the vitamin D, eating the grass? They’re going to have over 400 percent more vitamin A and vitamin E in that meat,” Jayson explained.

“There’s going to be 300 percent more of something called CLA, or conjugated linoleic acid. This is a kind of fat that science thinks is going to help prevent cancer, it’s also a kind of fat to help burn our body fat. This is a fat that these cows can really only get when they eat grass,” he said.

It's not just diet that contributes to micronutrient deficiency. Smoking, living in a polluted city, stress, prescription medicine, even exercise, all deplete our body's reserve of vitamins and minerals.

Could you be micronutrient deficient? Take this quiz to find out.

For the original article, visit .

10 Ways to Tell Your Kids You Are Proud of Them

Each month, my kids and I have breakfast with a group of other dads and their kids. As each dad takes his turn going around the table speaking about their kids and what they're proud of, I watch their kids. They perk up, their eyes wide open in anticipation, as their dad shares why he's proud. Their reactions are priceless and my kids have the exact same response.

The "pride exercise" is the highlight of each breakfast, and one of the foundational pieces at each monthly All Pro Dad's Day Breakfasts. Every single dad and kid at the breakfasts love it. But part of me wonders, as great as this exercise is, how often do we do this when we are not at an All Pro Dad's Day breakfast. Do we let our kids know that we are proud of them enough?

If we only do it once a month, then the answer is *no*.

We may want to, but sometimes the busyness of life works against us and we don't realize we could encourage our kids

more. How great would it be if we did the pride exercise on a regular basis.

Here are 10 ways to say, “I am proud of you”:

1. “You did a great job cleaning your room!”
2. “That was hard work, but you finished the job!”
3. “You are an amazing brother/sister!”
4. “You’re showing great leadership (at school, on your team)!”
5. “It makes me proud to say ‘that’s my son/daughter!’”
6. “You must be the fastest kid on your team!”
7. “You’re a really a great reader.”
8. “How did you know that answer? That’s amazing. You are so smart!”
9. “You are very mature for a __-year-old kid.”
10. “That was a tough situation, but you handled it like a champ!”

One of the best ways to let your kids know you are proud of them more often is to intentionally catch them doing something good. When they play sports, look for the good.

When they are practicing an instrument, find their improvement. When they interact with their siblings or friends, be on the lookout. The more we search for something, the more likely we’ll find it.

Look for reasons to say, “I am proud of you ...” to your kids and follow through on it.

Jackie Bledsoe is an author, blogger and speaker. But first and foremost, he is a husband and father of three who helps

men better led and love the ones who matter most. For the original article, visit .

Study Links Foods High in Protein to Better Cardiovascular Health

High protein consumption may be better for your health than you might first imagine. In fact, a team of researchers from the University of East Anglia (UEA) and London's King College has discovered that consuming a diet filled meat and plant-based amino acids offer positive cardiovascular health benefits.

Eating foods high in seven specific amino acids is just as good as getting exercise and smoking cessation in terms of heart health improvements.

The team's research appeared in the July issue of *The Journal of Nutrition*. With the role protein consumption plays on cardiovascular health already established, the purpose of this new study taken on by researchers from UEA was to find out specifically what amino acids affected cardiovascular health and in what way.

High protein consumption and its role in improving cardiovascular health has been a subject of recent interest, especially in light of its relation to hypertension reduction. There has been an inverse association identified between increasing the number of amino acids from plant- and animal-based proteins one eats and a reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure. There is also a link between the

high protein consumption and a reduction in arterial stiffness.

The Study

Participants in the study included 2,000 healthy females with normal Body Mass Indexes (BMIs). Researchers examined the effects of seven different amino acids on the women's cardiovascular health. The study's data, used for examining the environmental and genetic causes of age-related disorders, comes from TwinsUK: a registry in the United Kingdom containing some 12,000 twins.

Researchers examined the dietary habits of all of the participants and made comparisons with clinical measurements of blood vessel stiffness, thickness, and blood pressure. The conclusion: Significant evidence exists suggesting that women who have a dietary intake high in the seven amino acids studied have lower levels of both arterial stiffness and blood pressure.

Interestingly, the extent of the association are parallel those positive cardiovascular benefits derived from a reduction in salt intake, an increase in physical activity, and the cessation of bad habits like smoking and alcohol consumption. More importantly, the source of the protein relates to the type of cardiovascular benefit each woman received. Participants consuming plant-based amino acids saw a reduction in blood pressure. When consuming animal-based proteins, a reduction in arterial stiffness results.

Heading up the research team is Dr. Amy Jennings, from the UEA's Norwich Medical School and Department of Nutrition. Jennings asserts the study demonstrates how certain amino acids can have a "protective effect" on one's cardiovascular health. She also suggests an increase in one's dietary intake of foods like spinach, broccoli, lentils, beans, dairy, fish, and meats may be a method for reducing cardiovascular disease-

related risks.

The seven amino acids examined during the study include tyrosine, leucine, histidine, glycine, glutamic acid, cysteine, and arginine. Tyrosine, leucine, and glutamic acid are amino acids found in animal-based food sources and increases in the latter three amino acids were associated with a reduction in arterial stiffness.

High blood pressure is a condition that puts an individual at risk for cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Reducing issues with hypertension is necessary in order to reduce mortality risks, and experts suggest that with just a few dietary changes, like eating foods high in specific amino acids, can help, not just treat hypertension, but prevent it as well.

The amount one should consume to get the correct amount of amino acids for good cardiovascular health is equal to a 500 milliliter glass of skimmed milk, a 100 gram salmon fillet, or a 75 gram portion of steak.

Another participant in the study, Professor Tim Spector, from the Department of Twin Research and Genetic Epidemiology at King's College in London, calls the discovery "an exciting finding." He also asserts that more research is necessary, with the goal of discovering whether the mechanism is through gut microbes or direct.

Don Colbert, M.D. *has been board-certified in Family Practice for over 25 years and practices Anti-aging and Integrative medicine. He is a New York Times Bestselling author of books such as The Bible Cure Series, What Would Jesus Eat, Deadly Emotions, What You Don't Know May be Killing You, and many more with over 10 million books sold. He is the Medical Director of the Divine Health Wellness Center in Orlando, Florida where he has treated over 50,000 patients.*

For the original article, visit .

Autism Discoveries Offer New Help for Children

The number of American children suffering from autism has skyrocketed over the past 40 years, and now the condition affects more than 2 million in the United States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the current diagnosis rate is about 1 in 68 children, a tenfold increase.

In boys, the condition is even more common, about 1 out of 42, compared to 1 in 189 girls who are diagnosed with autism.

Fortunately, almost every month brings scientists closer to understanding exactly what causes autism and how to treat it.

Some recent studies found the following treatments, tests and drugs are of benefit to autistics:

Water pills. An inexpensive generic drug used to treat high blood pressure may relieve some of the behavioral symptoms of autism, especially in those with milder forms of the condition, according to a study published in the journal *Translational Psychiatry*.

The drug bumetanide is usually used to reduce excess fluid in patients with heart disease, but it also appears to alter the function of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), chemical messengers in the brain whose function appears to be affected by autism. In a human study, side effects were mild.

Low-glycemic diet. Pregnant mice prone to autism were fed a high-glycemic or low-glycemic diet and their offspring kept on the same diet after birth. Young mice that ate the high-

glycemic diet showed typical symptoms of autism, and their brains showed they were developing fewer neurons than mice fed the low-glycemic diet.

The mice on the high-glycemic diet also showed more inflammation, which some scientists have associated with autism. The research, conducted at the Salk Institute was published in the journal *Molecular Psychiatry*.

Sleeping sickness drug. Some experts believe that autism is the result of cells not communicating normally. Researchers at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine found that a drug used for treating sleeping sickness since 1916 restores normal signaling between cells, and reverses autism-like symptoms in mice after a single dose.

The drug suramin was only effective for five weeks, and can't be taken long-term because of side effects, but researchers hope that newer drugs may need to be given only during sensitive developmental periods to allow a better response to other behavioral and occupational therapies.

Diagnosing autism quickly is essential for early treatment, but currently there is no medical test. Here are two advances in diagnosis:

Sniff test. Normally, when you sniff something unpleasant, you can reduce the airflow in your nose to avoid inhaling it.

But researchers at Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science discovered that children with autism can't make those adjustments, and sniff the same way regardless of whether the smell is pleasant or unpleasant.

The scientists created a device which allowed them to deliver odors through the nose and measure a child's nasal airflow in response to pleasant or unpleasant smells.

Children without autism adjusted their airflow within 305

milliseconds after smelling an odor, but the airflow didn't change at all in children with autism.

The test was 81 percent accurate in diagnosing autism.

Eye-tracking technology. Children who have autism have advanced perceptual skills in infancy before the onset of clinical symptoms, says a study published in the journal *Current Biology*.

By tracking how fast an infant could follow letters that popped up on a screen, researchers found that those with enhanced searching ability at nine months showed more symptoms of autism at two years. Children with autism, for instance, had a superior ability to pick out an odd item in a series, such as the letter S in a string of Xs.

New findings are proving that not all aspects of autism are negative.

British psychologists found that while people with high levels of autistic traits tended to produce fewer responses when presented with a problem, the responses they did have were more original and creative than responses from non-autistics.

For the original article, visit .

When a Vision of Raising the Dead Becomes Reality

During my time at *Charisma*, I've personally reported on two incidents of the Holy Spirit raising someone from the dead. The first time, God used Chauncey Crandall. The second time, God used Robby Dawkins.

Of course, I've read the Bible accounts of Elijah, Jesus and Paul raising people from the dead. I've read rather colorful stories of Smith Wigglesworth raising people from the dead. I even read about the Holy Spirit raising a man from the dead—after he had been embalmed—at a Reinhard Bonnke meeting without anyone praying over him. Then there's David Hogan, who some call the "Dead Raiser" because of how often God uses him to raise the dead.

But a video I watched on YouTube (above) recently was miraculous on top of miraculous and shows the power of prophetic ministry in the dead raising arena. There is at least one recording in modern history of someone seeing a vision of resurrection—and then witnessing the actual resurrection. William Branham, a prophet from southern Kentucky who rose to fame during the Voice of Healing movement and was known for healing manifestations with the help of an angel, had a vision in Georgia.

What William Branham Saw

"I seen a little boy being raised from the dead," Branham said. "I went down in Miami and there predicted it before thousands of people."

Branham not only predicted it, he described with minute detail what the young boy would look like, right down to his hair style and his eye color. Then it happened. Two years later, Branham was in Finland when he came upon the scene a deadly car crash. An American-made car struck and killed two children.

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As Branham tells it, the car knocked one of the children into a tree and crushed his brains. The car rolled over the other child and he was laying dead underneath some coats. Branham

says his companions went over to look at the little boy and came back crying. They tried to convince Branham to go see for himself but he declined because he had a son nearly the same age.

“Finally, they persuaded me to go over and when I went to look at the little lad, I looked down at him and my heart was breaking to see the little fella and I turned away,” Branham said. “And when I turned away, something laid its hand on my shoulder. I thought it was Brother [G. Gordon] Lindsay and I looked around and there was nobody around me at all and the hand was still on my shoulder. See how stupid a preacher can be?”

What William Braham Did

Branham recalls that the boy's parents were on their way to the sad scene. The child had been dead about 30 minutes. Branham said he looked down twice and then asked someone to raise the coat off the boy's lifeless body. At that moment, the Lord replayed in his mind the vision he had seen in Georgia of a little boy being raised from the dead. It was the same boy lying on the ground!

“Every bone in his body was broken and his foot run through his sock. It was that boy perfectly ... Oh my, what a feeling. You could take every scientist in the world and stand them there and every demon out of torment could be standing there—it's going to happen anyhow ... God's already said it and it's going to be done,” Branham said. “I said, ‘If that boy isn't on his feet in the next five minutes I'm a false prophet.’”

As the story goes, Braham knelt down over the boy just as he had seen himself do in the vision and prayed, “Lord, God of heavens and earth, over in the homeland you showed me this vision while passing through Georgia one night ... I pray to thee Lord God that now that you will confirm the word so they

might know that you're still the Lord Jesus and that Finland would know that You are the resurrection from the dead."

With that, Branham laid his hands on the lifeless boy and called for the spirit of death to give the boy back. Immediately, he said, the little boy jumped up screaming and running around. He was raised from the dead and his broken bones healed—all in an instant. The news spread all over Finland. The mayor certified the event and it goes down in church history as one of the most astounding miracles ever.

Branham waged prophetic warfare against death based on a vision from the Lord and God was glorified. What vision has God given you?

Jennifer LeClaire is senior editor of Charisma. She is also director of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, co-founder of , on the leadership team of the New Breed Revival Network and author of several books, including *The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening*; *Mornings With the Holy Spirit*, *Listening Daily to the Still, Small Voice of God*; *The Making of a Prophet* and *Satan's Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft*. You can visit her website [here](#). You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow her on Twitter. Jennifer's Periscope handle is [@propheticbooks](#).

10 Parenting Ideas You Probably Never Thought Of

When my wife and I found out we were going to be parents, we immediately knew we needed wisdom. There was a couple with

grown kids we asked to meet with to ask questions.

Little did we know but a number of other couples had asked them for the same thing. They ended up hosting all of us for dinner to discuss parenthood. Some of the things they said were so simple I couldn't believe I hadn't thought of it myself.

Whether you are a new father or a seasoned veteran, we all need help. There's nothing more beneficial than sharing wisdom, ideas, and best practices. So here, in all humility, are 10 random parenting ideas that perhaps you never thought of.

1. Keep it simple. We tend to overdo the rule making. Keep the rules to a number you can actually enforce. That way you will be consistent and the kids will know what to expect. Also, be able to bring it all back to one or two big picture ideas for your kids to move toward.

2. Don't go it alone. We're not talking about a "12-Step" program for dads (although it's not such a bad idea) but more of a support and encouragement of other dads in the same boat. Our All Pro Dad's Day program is perfect for this.

3. Ramp up the routine and the predictability. Children thrive on predictability. When they know what to expect (and you know what to expect), a lot of the stress evaporates.

4. Have kids take turns being "in charge" of chores for a day. (They make the assignments and you have to work too). Seriously, what's a day with the shoe on the other foot? You'll learn something, they'll learn something; it's a win-win.

5. Try "Family Game Night." Again, make this routine. Board games and card games help reinforce the idea that "there's a bigger plan." Everyone's on the same page; problem solving skills are enhanced. It sounds "old school," we know, but

there's a lot in "old school" we could all use right about now.

6. Apologize when you're wrong. As parents, we should constantly model appropriate behavior and interaction. It's called family leadership. When we're wrong, which will happen quite a bit, we need to own it. If we don't, they never will.

7. Let kids help make the rules. A family is not a democracy. But, a family is a place where we teach, we all learn, and problem solving is practiced. Studies clearly demonstrate greater "buy-in" from children who have a hand in developing rules and consequences.

8. Try a day without rules. Well, maybe one rule: They still need to stay safe. Take a weekend and let them choose everything: meals (even if it's candy), activities (you must join in), their bedtime (or lack of one), etc. They may see the value of all of your rules the next day.

9. It's not all about the kids. Strong families are built around strong marriages. Ultimately, the most important element of family life is the relationship between mom and dad. That's job one. Your kids will be happier. Even if you are no longer together, the way you treat each other will affect them.

10. Babysitting reciprocity. Find other families that are in the same season of life. Consistent date nights with babysitters can get expensive. Take turns babysitting one another's kids to keep date night affordable. Obviously, choose carefully. I recommend having medical information and consents in place ahead of time. There may come a time when you need it.

For the original article, visit .