

10 Reasons Why You Should Be Consuming Fermented Foods

Our bodies house ten times more bacteria than cells, and there are more than 100 trillion bacteria on and within the body. Only ten percent of our cells are human. The remaining 90 percent of the cells living within the body are bacterial.

For some of us, that is almost too uncomfortable to think about, but what we should really start to realize is the important role that bacteria play in our overall well-being: This includes the bacteria in the gut.

1. Bacteria in the human body. The 100 trillion bacteria residing on and in our bodies are responsible for things like making the immune system stronger, synthesizing vitamins, and digesting the food we eat. Just as light needs dark to exist, we need bacteria if we are going to continue to exist. The microbiome, which is all of the bacterial cells inside the body, is one of the biggest factors playing a role in our health. Gut bacteria is part of the reason our bodies are capable of assimilating and digesting food. Now, scientists are finding that some bacteria may influence behaviors, thoughts, moods, and personality.

2. Birth and bacterial exposure. When a child is born it is the moment the child begins receiving exposure to the bacteria the body requires. The baby's first exposure to bacteria comes from vaginal delivery and the second comes from when the mother breastfeeds the child. While in the uterus, a baby remains within a sterile environment. However, passage through the birth canal causes bacteria from the mother to pass to the child's skin, eyes, and mouth: This bacteria then colonizes on and within the child. If the mother breastfeeds the child, it exposes the baby to bacteria that passes from the mother to child through the breast milk and skin-to-skin contact.

Researchers have found children who come into the world through C-section do not end up with a healthy mix of the bacteria needed for optimal well-being. In various hospitals there are ongoing experiments where health care professionals place gauze inside the birth mother's vagina for about an hour before the child is delivered through Cesarean birth. Once the baby is taken from the mother's womb, a health care professional takes the bacteria soaked gauze and rubs it onto the child's skin, face, and eyes in an effort to mimic the effects of a vaginal birth where bacterial exposure occurs. Of course, if such actions will prove beneficial remains unknown. It will take a number of years to assess if there are beneficial health effects from the bacterial exposure in the children involved in the experiment.

3. Vitamins & gut bacteria. Even harmful bacteria has different strains of which some prove harmless and beneficial to the body. For instance, *Escherichia coli* (E coli) has more than a single strain, and some strains of E. coli and another bacteria called *Bacillus subtilis* are responsible for synthesizing Vitamin K. Researchers have discovered that bacteria synthesizes a variety of intestinal bacteria. In addition to Vitamin K, the healthy bacteria synthesizes an array of B vitamins. Now recall for a moment how babies first come into the world and are not exposed to bacteria until passing through the vaginal canal, and then you can understand why doctors feel the need to give babies a shot of Vitamin K at birth: when born, the child lacks the bacteria in the gut to trigger its synthesis. A lack of certain bacteria in the gut may be responsible for the onset of at least some vitamin deficiencies as well.

4. The autism & gut bacteria connection. A study is currently ongoing at Arizona State University where researchers are looking into a possible connection between gut bacteria and Autism. Researchers have already found that individuals who have been diagnosed with the condition also have gut bacteria

that differs from the bacteria of an otherwise healthy individual. In fact, the bacteria is in differing ratios, as those who have Autism tend to be lacking hundreds of bacterial strains considered beneficial to the body.

It is too soon to suggest that the absence of different bacterial strains is responsible for the neurological dissimilarities between neurotypical people and those people who are on the Autism Spectrum. Nevertheless, there are experiments occurring involving the beneficial transfer of bacteria through fecal transplants. The transplantation is done in an effort to bring balance back to the bacteria in the guts of Autistic individuals who have gastrointestinal difficulties.

There is some promising evidence of a link between gut bacteria and Autism, since scientists have been able to produce autistic like behaviors in mice simply by changing the balance of the bacteria in their gut. Once the microbiome was rebalanced in the same mice, the autistic-like behaviors disappeared and the mice regained behaviors considered neurotypical. Additional experiments were conducted with a pregnant mouse where the mother's microbiome was altered; the newborn mice demonstrated autistic like behaviors following the changes to the mother's microbiome.

5. Gut bacteria and its influence on immunological functioning. Researchers experimenting on mice have revealed the role gut bacteria plays on the functioning of the immune system. Studies have indicated that when mice did not have well-developed bacteria in the gut, they were prone to illness and more likely to get seriously ill when compared to mice that had a healthy balance of gut bacteria. Likewise, in societies that heavily rely on products containing anti-bacterial ingredients, people are prone to illness more often and with greater severity than individuals living in societies that do not rely on antibacterial containing products.

The immune system is both adaptive and dependent on certain microbes responsible for releasing Immunoglobulin A (IGA). IGA tags or marks harmful bacteria and viruses and the immune system defends the body by destroying the marked microbes. Researchers surmise the immune system exists for the sole purpose of protecting the microbes in the gut.

6. The link between an absence of gut bacteria and autoimmune disease. When the immune system suddenly turns on the body and healthy tissue the condition is called an autoimmune disease. For reasons unknown, something triggers T-cells to start attacking healthy cells. The attack leads to inflammation in the body. The attacked tissues no longer work the way they should. Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is one such autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the neurological system. Some researchers are suggesting that the reason for such autoimmune diseases could be due to the near or complete absence of *Bacteris fragellus* in the gut. *Bacteris fragellus* is found in minimal amounts or not at all in people suffering from autoimmune disease. The bacteria is responsible for the creation of polysaccharide A (PSA): a chemical that improves immune system functioning when it interacts with T-cells and triggers an anti-inflammatory response in the body. Tests in the lab reveal PSA not only treats and prevents MS and Inflammatory Bowel Disease. Within two to three years, *Bacteris fragellus* should go into clinical trials.

7. What is leaky gut syndrome? If the walls of the intestines weaken and the lining allows for the leakage of gut bacteria through its walls, thereby allowing molecules to reach other parts of the body, the condition is known as Leaky Gut Syndrome. Researchers have discovered that when minuscule particles of waste, food, and bacteria leak through the intestines and enter into the body, a whole host of symptoms can occur. Leaky Gut Syndrome produces issues with allergies, brain fog, pain, inflammation, and headaches. Thankfully, it is possible to restore the balance of gut bacteria so that the

leaky gut and intestinal walls heal.

8. How bacteria in your gut affects the human brain. The bacteria in your gut play a role in how your brain works. The physical body connects the body, the immune system, and the mind through multiple body functions and systems including neural pathways, hormones, the endocrine system, and gut microbes. Neurons travel from the human brain and send out electrical messages to the entire body; as much as 70 percent of all neurons that travel from the brain are actually in the gut. The Vagus Nerve gives the bacteria in your gut access to the brain. What's more, the same bacteria are capable of creating neurotransmitters that travel as messages to the brain.

The bottom line: gut bacteria has an influence on your brain. As an example, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, a bacteria found in abundance in soil, can reduce stress, depression, and anxiety in mice. In contrast, lab tests where mice were given antibiotics to minimize the amount of gut bacteria were seen to become aggressive. Once the gut bacteria were rebalanced, the mice were no longer aggressive. Research has revealed that people who consume bifidobacterium and lactobacillus, two probiotics, have experienced reduced anxiety and stress as a result.

9. Gut bacterial and your body weight. While obesity has reached epidemic proportions in America, only part of the problem may be due to lack of exercise and poor eating habits. The other part of the problem may actually have to do with an imbalance in gut bacteria. Researchers have found that in thin animals and people, the microbiome is completely different than the microbiome in obese animals and people. Experiments involving mice with microbes associated with being overweight eat more frequently and more with every feeding than thinner mice. Such studies suggest an imbalance of gut bacteria may contribute to or worsen Metabolic Syndrome: A disorder featuring conditions like Pre-Diabetes, Type 2 Diabetes,

hypertension, and increased belly fat. Appetite-controlling hormones are produced in your brain. The production of corticosteroids can alter the balance of microbes in the gut, while the existing microbes in the gut can play a role in the production of corticosteroids.

10. The microbiome and food intake. The bacteria in the gut play an important role in your general well-being. An imbalance in gut bacteria can contribute to weight gain, excessive hunger, changes in your mood, and can increase, not just the likelihood, but the severity of illness. Some foods actually contribute to the overgrowth of bacteria that's harmful to the body. Sugar is a substance that feeds yeast microbes that can cause an excess of yeast growth. In contrast, consuming fiber derived from some grains, vegetables, and some fats feed good bacteria while starving off the undesirable bacteria in the gut.

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For the original article, visit .

5 Ways to Refresh a Burned Out Soul

"As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul after you, O God" (Psalm 42:1, MEV).

Burnout—it's real, and it can have major consequences. It can leave you empty, discouraged and exhausted, with little energy left for God. Sound familiar? Maybe it's time to replenish. Start here.

1. Get away. "Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest a while, for many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat" (Mark 6:31, MEV).

You don't have to use vacation days or drive far away to take a break with God. You can pick a place close by to relax and simply enjoy His presence. Here are some ideas: a community park, a pool, a hammock or rocking chair, a quiet corner of an ice cream or coffee shop, a bookstore or library, or a spot by the water. You might even bring some music or a journal.

If you like to be active, try going on a hike or bike ride, kayaking, taking a one-person picnic, gardening or painting. Getting away doesn't have to mean a change in your physical location, as long as you're getting away from daily stresses to spend time with God.

2. Be still. "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Ps. 46:10, MEV).

Taking time to "be still" may be harder today than ever. So much screams for our attention in this fast-paced, digital world. In the Bible, the prophet Elijah heard God in the form of a "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). If we don't intentionally take time to turn down life's noise and be still, we could miss God's quiet message to our hearts.

Part of being still means taking a break from the demands of work, school and other activities and focusing on God. If you aren't intentionally setting aside one day a week to rest and worship, now is a good time to start.

Here's an Answer from Billy Graham on why God set aside a Sabbath day and how we can make it part of our lives:

replenish | re-PLEN-ish

(v): To fill up again; to restore or make complete again

3. Listen. *"A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel" (Prov. 1:5, MEV).*

God often speaks to us in a still, small voice. Other times, He sends a meaningful message through a person or experience at the right moment. Yet, worry, stress and a growing "to-do" list can clutter our minds and keep us from listening.

This message from Billy Graham, "The Rest That Endures," may be just what you need to hear.

Watch this video of Ruth Bell Graham's poem, "Stillness," can also offer encouragement:

4. Meditate. *"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1:2, MEV).*

There are so many thoughts crowding our minds that it can be hard to focus. We're pulled in every direction, with this person or that thing demanding our attention. But then we come to a verse like Psalm 1:2, which tells us to meditate on God's Word. How exactly do you do that? And with such a hectic schedule?

Here are some practical ways to focus your attention on God, even when you're busy.

5. Be present. *"Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed. And Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her"(Luke 10:41-42, MEV).*

Do you find yourself going through the motions or so frazzled that you can't really enjoy a special moment? As the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10 reveals, we can't afford to be so

busy or distracted that we fail to hear God's voice, experience His presence, or honor His goodness.

This article is part of the 6-week Summer Soul Series from BGEA.

For the original article, visit .

5 Things to Help Avoid Raising Codependent Kids

It may not seem like a big deal today, but shielding kids from consequences can have long-term consequences for parents. The following true story connects the dots on how we literally can't afford to raise codependent kids or be enabling parents.

The quarter in which the Florida housing market crashed was also the quarter my friend's brother Bill closed on a house he clearly couldn't afford. He financed 110 percent of the purchase price, spent the extra cash on cosmetic upgrades, immediately put the house back on the market, and waited for his big payday.

Bill's salary wouldn't nearly cover the mortgage, so his parents bailed him out. Within a year, the house tanked 40 percent of its value—long story short—Bill lost both the house and \$50,000 of his parents' money.

Bill is 45 years old, and he's gone through a lot of his parents' savings over the past 25 years; but there's little chance he'll change until they're as broke as he is. Why? Because they've been codependent since the enabling started in the first grade.

It started small, such as Mom doing his chores so Bill wouldn't get in trouble with Dad. Quickly, it moved to homework cover-ups and "science project by parent." Then it graduated to Mom covering when he skipped school; Dad lying to the police when he wrecked a car he didn't have permission to drive; and increasingly large financial defaults. By the time Mom and Dad let Bill move back home after failing college (no questions asked), he felt entitled to every bailout that came his way. The bailouts just kept getting bigger.

Naturally, we're all concerned about keeping our kids safe and happy. But we raise our children to fly, not flop around the nest. One day, we're going to have to let go and, when we do, it's a good idea to make sure they're equipped and ready. Or they'll end up like Bill: pushing 50 years of age and still suffering from failure to thrive.

1. Expect more of them. We all tend to rise to the level of expectation. A two-year-old can learn to pick up toys. A 3-year-old can help to set the table. A 4-year-old can take dirty clothes to the laundry room and learn how to operate the machine. The more, and the earlier we train children to contribute, the more self-reliance will become a part of their DNA.

2. Allow (managed) natural consequences. Typically, there is no better learning tool than to experience the consequence of behavior. A 5-year-old refuses to clean up the toys in the middle of the floor? The toys visit the attic for a prescribed amount of time. A 10-year-old curses? Get a dictionary, then handwrite five acceptable words that mean the same thing, plus their complete definitions. Establish a direct line between behavior and a real world result.

3. Be consistent. Mom and Dad need to be on the same page because learning thrives where children know what to expect. When children understand that what they do or do not do makes a consistent and measurable difference in the quality of their

life, they will become more likely to accept responsibility for themselves and work to impact the outcome more favorably.

4. Be clear. Leave no doubt as to the outcome when encouraging children to accept responsibility. Then having made ourselves clear, we need to follow through. This is why it's important not to threaten beyond our willingness to enforce. If we say, for example, "If you do that again, I will take away your phone for a month," but then only take it away for one day, we have created a problem.

5. Trust them. Having made ourselves clear, we must demonstrate trust by getting out of the way. We can't expect a child to grow if we treat them as if they are incapable of doing what we ask. When they succeed, we congratulate. If they fail, we follow through on consequences because we believe they could have done better.

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For the original article, visit .

7 Things You Should Never Eat or Drink

Every time you go grocery shopping, you're making decisions that will have an impact on your health. While you may be well aware that some items you toss in your grocery cart aren't the healthiest choice on the shelf, you may not realize just how unhealthy they truly are.

While one bad food may not have long-term consequences for your health, a cart full of processed foods loaded with carbs and sugar seriously endangers your health, and even some foods you may think are healthy are anything but good for you.

Here's a list of seven foods you should NEVER eat or drink:

1. Microwave popcorn. A report from the FDA found that popcorn bags are linked with a chemical called perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), the same toxic chemical found in many non-stick pots and pans. PFOAs are linked to bladder cancer, thyroid problems, and high cholesterol. Some experts theorize that 20 percent of the PFO found in our bodies comes from microwave popcorn. The smell of popcorn microwaved in a commercial bag is due to a chemical called diacetyl, a synthetic butter flavoring. It causes a disease called bronchiolitis obliterans, or "popcorn worker's lung," in factory workers who inhale the fumes. Due to public concerns, some manufacturers of popcorn have eliminated diacetyl.

2. Processed meats. Hot dogs, bacon, ham, and other processed meats are loaded with unhealthy amounts of fat, salt, and preservatives, but they can also contain nitrites and nitrates, chemical additives used to enhance their taste, boost their color, and keep them from spoiling. Over 90 percent of nitrates tested have been found to cause cancer in various organs of the body, including the breast and stomach.

Bacon, salami, and other cured meats can aggravate respiratory diseases like chronic bronchitis and emphysema to the point of requiring a trip to the emergency room. Nitrates have been found to increase the risk of developing COPD, and to increase the chances of hospitalization from the disease. Nitrates can also trigger headaches in sensitive people.

3. Farm-raised fish. According to the Environmental Working Group, most farm-raised fish are fed genetically modified feed. Fish tested were also contaminated with polychlorinated

biphenyls (PCBs) at high levels, and were 16 times more likely to be contaminated than wild-caught fish. In addition, farm-fed fish were found to contain pesticides and other toxins from contaminated water that drains into ponds.

A study published in *Science* found that farmed salmon had 10 times the level of contaminants as wild salmon. Dr. David Carpenter, author of the study, told PBS that farmed salmon was so contaminated that eating more than one meal a month raised the risk for cancer. Some experts believe that some European farmed salmon should only be eaten once every four months.

4. Margarine. Although margarine was billed for decades as the healthy alternative to butter, many studies confirmed trans-fats in margarine raised cholesterol and damaged blood vessels. The more solid the margarine at room temperature, the more trans-fats it contained. Manufacturers have reformulated their products, but many health experts aren't convinced the products are healthy as many contain genetically modified and artificial ingredients.

5. Soft drinks. Whether sweetened with sugar or artificial sweeteners, sodas play havoc with your health. Sodas have been linked to the growing epidemics of obesity and diabetes. But sodas have also been linked to cancer: When sodium benzoate, used for mold prevention in many soft drinks, is mixed with vitamin C, it creates a carcinogenic substance called benzene. British researchers also found problems with sodium benzoate—they found it might be able to switch off vital parts of DNA called mitochondria, the “power station” of cells. The result could eventually causes cirrhosis of the liver and other degenerative diseases, such as Parkinson's.

Researchers at India's Tata Memorial Hospital found a “very significant correlation” between soft drinks and an increased risk of esophageal cancer, and other studies have linked soft drinks to the risk of deadly pancreatic cancer.

Sodas are also linked to cardiovascular problems. A study published in *Circulation*, the journal of the American Heart Association, found that people who drank one or more soft drinks each day were 25 percent more likely to develop high blood triglycerides, and 32 percent more likely to have low levels of “good” cholesterol.

6. Artificial sweeteners. “Artificial sweeteners are a disaster,” says board-certified family physician Dr. David Brownstein. “They’re known to cause neurologic problems, autoimmune disorders, and probably cancer,” he tells Newsmax Health.

We’ve been told for decades that artificial sweeteners help keep us slim, but recent studies have caused grave doubts. Researchers at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio found those who drank diet sodas were more likely to become overweight than those who drank regular sugary sodas.

For each can of diet soda consumed each day, the risk of obesity increased by 41 percent. After 10 years, those who drank two or more diet sodas a day increased their risk of obesity by 500 percent.

Artificial sweeteners also don’t appear to lower the risk of diabetes. A study published in the journal *Nature* found that diet sodas change the microbes living in the gut in a way that increases the risk of diabetes, and a study conducted at the University of Minnesota found that a single diet soda daily raised the risk of metabolic syndrome and diabetes by 36 percent.

Sodas may be harming women’s bones. Researchers at Tufts university found that women who drank sodas, including diet sodas, had lower bone density than women who didn’t drink them. The phosphoric acid in sodas leaches calcium from bones.

7. Conventionally grown potatoes. Since it's a root vegetable, potatoes absorb all of the chemicals in the soil—herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides. According to the USDA, 37 different pesticides have been found on conventionally grown potatoes. Of them, seven are possible carcinogens, nine are neurotoxins, and 12 are possible hormone disrupters. About 76 percent of all potatoes are contaminated with an herbicide called chlorpropham, which is used to keep potatoes from sprouting.

For the original article, visit .

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Why Do Spouses Sometimes Remember Things Differently?

One of the fun parts about getting to know a new couple is learning about how they first met. It's because, invariably, you don't get to hear just one story. You get to hear two: his and hers.

That's certainly true for my wife, Susan, and me. Our recollection of the details surrounding how we first met are a bit different. She says that I came to an event at her Alpha Delta Pi sorority house at University of Florida because I had my eye on one of the other girls there. My version is a bit different.

I went to her sorority house that evening not because I had someone particular in mind, but because I figured that a house full of young women was about as good a place a young man could spend an evening as you might find.

Shortly after I arrived, I saw this cute, sparkling, smiling brunette taking part in a ladies barbershop quartet. It was part of the show that the ladies were putting on, and I just knew that I needed to get to know her.

Remembering fun things like this differently doesn't really matter in the big scheme of things. But conflicting memories can be important when you're dealing with events and situations that go deeper. Maybe you and your spouse have different accounts of an awkward situation at a family gathering and, as a result, can't decide how to deal with it.

Or, you don't agree on the outcome of a serious conversation about what to do with a rebellious teenager. What do you do when you want to be on the same page, but seem to be reading different scripts?

Assume Best Intent

Don't blurt, "That's not true!" or "You're wrong." By doing so, you are essentially calling your partner a liar or putting them on the defensive. Remember, two people can witness the same event and have different accounts. It happens sometimes with witnesses in court cases. Different does not necessarily mean someone is lying or wrong.

Keep in mind too that if it's an issue concerning the two of you, neither of you is coming to it devoid of feelings. Their emotions may have colored what they remember, but the same is true for you too. Presume they have good intentions and are not just trying to make you look bad.

Accept Your Differences

While the angle from which we see things affects the way we interpret them, the brains of men and women also process information differently. There's a reason men tend to be "silo" thinkers, able to separate issues one from another; while, for women, everything is interrelated like one giant

flow chart. Men and women perceive and process things differently. Our mental “computers” don’t run the exact same software.

In their helpful book *His Brain, Her Brain: How Divinely Designed Differences Can Strengthen Your Marriage*, Dr. Walt and Barb Larimore explain how the two sexes are simply wired quite differently. Drawing from scientific research, they examine the ways in which male and female brains develop and function uniquely and how their essential chemistry differs from each other.

Address the Issue

Don’t get lost in the disputed facts. Sure, there will be times when someone’s memory is not just different, but wrong and in a way that matters. If one of you failed to pay the mortgage in time, it may be important to clear up who dropped the ball so that you can both be sure it doesn’t happen again.

Sometimes couples remember things differently because one or both are not really listening or with their full attention. As a result, the person only hears part of what was said and thus has a different recollection of the facts. That’s why listening well to one another is so important.

The main point in addressing differing memories is not which version of events is the right. It’s not about winning an argument. The goal should be to try to understand why your partner recalls things the way he or she does and what that means for you both going forward. Always ask yourself, “What’s more important, being right or the relationship?”

For more on resolving issues well, read my “8 Secrets of Conflict Resolution.”

What has been your experience of remembering things differently than your spouse? Share how have you learned to deal with this area of potential conflict.

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, please visit .

Unforgiveness Can Bring Lethal Results

Unforgiveness is classified in medical books as a disease. According to Dr. Steven Standiford, chief of surgery at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America, refusing to forgive makes people sick and keeps them that way.

With that in mind, forgiveness therapy is now being used to help treat diseases, such as cancer.

“It’s important to treat emotional wounds or disorders because they really can hinder someone’s reactions to the treatments, even someone’s willingness to pursue treatment,” Standiford explained.

Of all cancer patients, 61 percent have forgiveness issues, and of those, more than half are severe, according to research by Dr. Michael Barry, a pastor and the author of the book, *The Forgiveness Project*.

“Harboring these negative emotions, this anger and hatred, creates a state of chronic anxiety,” he said.

“Chronic anxiety very predictably produces excess adrenaline and cortisol, which deplete the production of natural killer cells, which is your body’s foot soldier in the fight against cancer,” he explained.

Barry said the first step in learning to forgive is to realize how much God has forgiven us.

“When a person forgives from the heart—which is the gold standard we see in Matthew 18, forgiveness from the heart—we find that they are able to find a sense of peacefulness. Quite often our patients refer to that as a feeling of lightness,” he said.

Barry said most people don’t realize what a burden anger and hatred were until they let them go.

For the original article, visit .

Does This 1954 Prophecy Foretell America’s Utter Destruction?

If you’ve heard of A.A. Allen (1911-1970), you know him as a healing evangelist from the Voice of Healing movement. He was an energetic character with ministry headquarters in Miracle Valley, Arizona. That was fitting, since he had a miracle ministry that saw all manner of sickness and disease.

Whether or not you’ve heard of Allen before, you need to read and pray over this prophecy. He had a startling vision on July 5, 1954—61 years ago almost to the day. This is long, but if you are interested in the end times and the fate of America, it’s worth reading and praying over. The following is the vision Allen received:

As I stood atop the Empire State Building, I could see the Statue of Liberty, illuminating the gateway to the new world. Here, spread before me like an animated map, is an area 60 or 80 miles in diameter. I was amazed that the Spirit of the Lord

should so move me, there atop the Empire State Building. Why should I feel such a surge of His Spirit and power there?

Suddenly I heard the voice of the Lord. It was as clear and as distinct as a voice could be. It seemed to come from the very midst of the giant telescope. But when I looked at the telescope, I knew it hadn't come from there, but directly from heaven. The voice said, "The eyes of the lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him. Herein you have done foolishly. Therefore, from henceforth, you shall have wars."

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Immediately when I heard the voice of God, I knew this was a quotation of Scripture. But never before had a thing come to me so forcibly by the power of the Spirit. The ticking of the telescope stopped. The man before me had used up his dimes worth. As he stepped away I knew that I was next. As I stepped to the telescope and dropped in my dime, immediately the ticking started again. This ticking was an automatic clock which would allow me to use the telescope for a definitely limited time only.

As I swung the telescope to the North, suddenly the Spirit of God came upon me in a way that I had never thought of before. Seemingly in the Spirit I was entirely caught away. I knew that the telescope itself had nothing to do with the distance which I was suddenly enabled to see, for I seemed to see things far beyond the range of the telescope, even on a bright clear day.

It was simply that God had chosen this time to reveal these things to me, for as I looked through the telescope, it was not Manhattan Island that I saw, but a far larger view. That morning, much of the view was impaired by fog. But suddenly as

the Spirit of the Lord came upon me the fog seemed to clear, until it seemed that I could see for thousands of miles.

But that which I was looking upon was not Manhattan Island, it was the entire North American continent spread out before me as a map is spread upon a table. It was not the East River and the Hudson River that I saw on either side, but the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. And instead of the Statue of Liberty standing there in the bay on her small island, I saw her standing far out in the Gulf of Mexico. She was between me and the United States.

I suddenly realized that the telescope had nothing to do with what I was seeing, but that it was a vision coming directly from God. And to prove this to myself I took my eyes away from the telescope, so that I was no longer looking through the lens, but the same scene remained before me.

The Sword and the Cup

There, clear and distinct, lay all the North American Continent, with all its great cities. To the North lay the Great Lakes. Far to the Northeast was New York City. I could see Seattle and Portland far to the Northwest. Down the West Coast, there were San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Closer in the foreground, there lay New Orleans, at the center of the Gulf Coast area. I could see the great towering ranges of the Rocky Mountains, and trace with my eye the Continental Divide. All this and more, I could see spread out before me as a great map upon a table.

And as I looked, suddenly from the sky I saw a giant hand reach down. That gigantic hand was reaching out toward the Statue of Liberty. In a moment her gleaming torch was torn from her hand, and in it instead was placed a cup. And I saw protruding from that great cup, a giant sword, shining as if a great light had been turned upon its glistening edge. Never

before had I seen such a sharp, glistening, dangerous sword. It seemed to threaten all the world.

As the great cup was placed in the hand of the Statue of Liberty, I heard these words,

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Drink ye and be drunken, spew and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send.” As I heard these words, I recognized them as a quotation from Jeremiah 25:7. I was amazed to hear the Statue of Liberty speak out in reply, “I WILL NOT DRINK!” Then as the voice of the thunder, I heard again the voice of the Lord, saying, “Thus says the Lord of Hosts, YE SHALL CERTAINLY DRINK.” (Jer. 25:28)

Then suddenly the giant hand forced the cup to the lips of the Statue of Liberty, and she became powerless to defend herself. The mighty hand of God forced her to drink every drop from the cup. As she drank the bitter dregs, these were the words that I heard, “Should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, says the Lord of Hosts.” (Jer. 25:29)

When the cup was withdrawn from the lips of the Statue of Liberty, I noticed the sword was missing from the cup, which could mean but one thing. THE CONTENTS OF THE CUP HAD BEEN COMPLETELY CONSUMED! I knew that the sword merely typified war, death and destruction, which is no doubt on the way.

Death in the Gulf of Mexico

Then as one drunken on too much wine, I saw the Statue of Liberty become unsteady on her feet and begin to stagger, and to lose her balance. I saw her splashing in the Gulf, trying to regain her balance. I saw her stagger again and again, and fall to her knees.

As I saw her desperate attempts to regain her balance, and

rise to her feet again, my heart was moved as never before with compassion for her struggles. But as she staggered there in the Gulf, once again I heard these words, "Ye shall drink and be drunken, and spew, and fall, and rise no more because of the sword that I shall send among you."

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As I watched, I wondered if the Statue of Liberty would ever be able to regain her feet—if she would ever stand again. And as I watched, it seemed that with all her power she struggled to rise, and finally staggered to her feet again, and stood there swaying drunkenly. I felt sure that at any moment she would fall again—possibly never to rise. I seemed overwhelmed with a desire to reach out my hand to keep her head above water, for I knew that if she ever fell again she would drown there in the Gulf.

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday" (Ps. 91:5-6).

The Black Cloud Coming Down Over Alaska

Then as I watched, another amazing thing was taking place. Far to the Northwest, just out over Alaska, a huge, black cloud was arising. As it rose, it was as black as night. It seemed to be in the shape of a man's head. As it continued to arise, I observed two light spots in the black cloud. It rose further, and a gaping hole appeared.

I could see that the black cloud was taking the shape of a skull, for now the huge, white, gaping mouth was plainly visible. Finally the head was complete. Then the shoulders began to appear and on either side long, black arms. It seemed that what I saw was the entire North American Continent, spread out like a map upon a table with this terrible

skeleton-formed cloud arising from behind the table.

It rose steadily until the form was visible down to the waist. At the waist, the skeleton seemed to bend towards the United States, stretching forth a hand toward the East and one toward the West—one toward New York and one toward Seattle.

As the awful form stretched forward, I could see that the entire attention seemed to be focused upon the U.S., overlooking Canada at least for the time being. As I saw the horrible black cloud in the form of a skeleton bending towards America, bending from the waist over, reaching down toward Chicago and out towards both coasts, I knew its one interest was to destroy the multitudes.

As I watched in horror, the great black cloud stopped just above the great lakes region, and turned its face towards New York City. Then out of the horrible, great gaping mouth began to appear wisps of white vapor that looked like smoke, as a cigarette smoker would blow puffs of smoke from his mouth. These whitish vapors were being blown toward New York City. The smoke began to spread, until it had covered all the eastern part of the United States.

Then the skeleton turned to the West, and out of the horrible mouth and nostrils came another great puff of white smoke. This time it was blown in the direction of the West Coast. In a few moments time, the entire West Coast and L.A. area was covered with its vapors. Then towards the center came a third great puff. As I watched, St. Louis and Kansas City were enveloped in its white vapors. Then on it came towards New Orleans.

Then on they swept until they reached the Statue of Liberty where she stood staggering drunkenly in the blue waters of The Gulf. As the white vapors began to spread around the head of the statue, she took in but one gasping breath, and then began to cough as though to rid her lungs of the horrible vapors she

had inhaled. One could readily discern by the coughing that those white vapors had seared her lungs.

What were these white vapors? Could they signify bacteriological warfare or nerve gas that could destroy multitudes of people in a few moments time? Then I heard the voice of God, as He spoke again:

“Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people. So with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the buyer, so with the seller, as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled, for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth mourns and fades away. The world languishes and fades away. The haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore has the curse devoured the earth and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men are left” (Is. 24:1-6).

As I watched, the coughing grew worse. It sounded like a person was about to cough out his lungs. The statue was moaning and groaning. She was in mortal agony. The pain must have been terrific, as again and again, she tried to clear her lungs of those horrible white vapors. I watched her there in the Gulf, as she staggered, clutching her lungs and her breast with her hands. Then she fell to her knees.

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In a moment, she gave one final cough, and made a last desperate effort to rise from her knees, and then fell face forward into the waters of the Gulf and lay still as death.

Tears ran down my face as I realized that she was dead! Only the lapping of the waves, splashing over her body, which was partly under the water, and partly out of water, broke the silence. "A fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns; the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them, a desolate wilderness" (Joel 2:3).

The Sirens

Suddenly the silence was shattered by the screaming of sirens. The sirens seemed to scream, "RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!"

Never before had I heard such shrill, screaming sirens. They seemed to be everywhere—to the North, South, the East and the West. There seemed to be multitudes of sirens. And as I looked, I saw people everywhere running. But it seemed none of them ran more than a few paces, and then they fell. And even as I had seen the statue struggling to regain her poise and balance, and finally falling to die on her face, I now saw millions of people falling in the streets, on the sidewalks, struggling.

I heard their screams for mercy and help. I heard their horrible coughing as though their lungs had been seared with fire. I heard the moanings and groanings of the doomed and the dying. As I watched, a few finally reached shelters, and above the moaning and groanings, I heard these words:

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth for the Lord has a controversy with the nations. He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, says the Lord. Behold evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even onto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented neither gathered nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground" (Jer. 25:31-33).

The Rockets

Then suddenly I saw from the Atlantic and from the Pacific, and out of the Gulf, rocket-like objects that seemed to come up like fish leaping out of the water. High into the air they leaped, each headed in a different direction, but every one towards the U.S.

On the ground, the sirens screamed louder. And up from the ground I saw similar rockets begin to ascend. To me, these appeared to be interceptor rockets although they arose from different points all over the U.S. However, none of them seemed to be successful in intercepting the rockets that had risen from the ocean on every side.

These rockets finally reached their maximum height, slowly turned over, and fell back toward the earth in defeat. Then suddenly, the rockets which had leaped out of the ocean like fish exploded all at once. The explosion was ear-splitting.

Huge Ball of Fire

The next thing which I saw was a huge ball of fire. The only thing I have ever seen which resembled the thing I saw in my vision was the picture of the explosion of the H-bomb in the South Pacific. In my vision, it was so real I seemed to feel a searing heat from it.

As the vision spread before my eyes, and I viewed the widespread desolation brought about by the terrific explosions, I could not help thinking," While the defenders of our nation have quibbled over what means of defense to use, and neglected the only true means of defense, faith and dependence upon the true and living God, the thing which she greatly feared has come unto her!

How true it has proven that "Except the Lord keep The city, The watchman watches but in vain." Then as the noise of the battle subsided, to my ears came this quotation from Joel, the

second chapter, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations. A fire devours before them; and behind them a flame burns: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run ..." (Joel 2:4).

Words From Jennifer

This prophecy is startling. Allen couldn't have possibly known about some of the things he saw in this vision, like the oil spill in the Gulf polluting. He had no idea how bad things would get in this nation way back in 1954, when most of America was still seeing happy days. He probably never dreamed that Americans would lose so many of their liberties and Christians would be persecuted for refusing to bake wedding cakes for gay couples.

I believe this vision is to serve as a warning. The church needs to repent. America needs to repent. And we need to do it sooner rather than later. I am believing for a Third Great Awakening that would avert this disaster, but it could be that another great awakening doesn't come until things get much, much worse. As it stands, we're just not desperate enough. What will it take? I'm praying for a spirit of repentance to roll over the church, in the name of Jesus.

Pockets of true revival are breaking out across America. Want to know more about the next great move of God? Click here to see Jennifer LeClaire's new book, featuring Dutch Sheets, Reinhard Bonnke, Jonathan Cahn, Billy Graham and others.

Jennifer LeClaire is senior editor of Charisma. She is also director of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 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.

Here Are Some Added Health Benefits in Fermented Foods

Fermented foods have been a food choice for centuries. The practice is defined as a transformation of a substance (organic food) caused by bacteria, yeasts, molds, and other microorganisms.

Complex organic catalysts and enzymes trigger a chemical response in the organic substance(s). In early history, this transformation was considered an act of the Divine.

Since the Neolithic Era, people have fermented foods, and one of the earliest references to the practice occurred in the Jiahu village in China, where honey, rice, and beverages were made via fermentation. Wine was made in ancient Babylon and Egypt as well as pre-Hispanic Mexico and the Sudan.

Some of the earliest foods and beverages that underwent the fermentation process include cheese, bread, wine and beer.

Researchers suggest that the process of fermentation was most

likely stumbled upon when people started using salt in food. The accidental discovery of salt's preservative power later led to the ancient Chinese to begin inoculating foods with enzyme creating molds.

In more modern times, the fermentation process is also used to make vitamins, antibiotics, and both gluconic and citric acid, in addition to its continued use on the preservation and transformation of foods and beverages.

Fundamental Benefits

One of the most basic and fundamental benefits found in fermented foods is that the food is preserved longer than fresh food. The flavor of the preserved foods is intensified, and you can ferment foods for relatively little expense. Fermenting foods increases the bioavailability of the nutrients in the food. Thus, you derive greater levels of nutrients in an easily digestible form, all the while increasing the number of good bacteria consumed.

When foods are going through the fermentation process, the bacteria predigest some of the food, break down cellular walls in veggies, and make the nutrients and vitamins easy to absorb. This is true of carrots, beets, collard greens, peas, kelp, kale, parsley, broccoli, and spinach as well as other fermented vegetables.

Fermented Foods & Gastrointestinal Health

There's evidence the consumption of foods that have been fermented eases digestion and simultaneously improves absorption.

Our bodies are exposed to a multitude of factors that throw off the inner balance of the bacteria in the gut. When this happens, it can affect your ability to absorb foods properly, and it can also lead to illness and the weakening of immune system functioning. Some of the factors that cause bacterial

imbalance in the gut include the use of antibiotics, excessive sugar consumption, excessive carbohydrate consumption, too many processed foods in the diet, and psychological stress.

Consuming fermented foods helps in restoring the balance of good versus harmful gut bacteria. A number of health conditions are linked to an imbalance of gut bacteria, including conditions like asthma, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, constipation, Candidiasis (area and systemic yeast infections), and gluten and lactose intolerance.

The Health Benefits of Fermented Vegetables

When you ferment vegetables, you are able to easily digest and absorb vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, antioxidants, and enzymes in the food. For instance, when fermenting beets, you increase the nutrient density in beets especially Vitamin C.

Pickled beets are also an outstanding source of magnesium, Vitamin A, Potassium, fiber, and low in fat. Meanwhile, carrots have no saturated fat, no cholesterol and offer 60 percent the daily allowance of vitamin A after fermentation.

The vegetable is rich in carotenoids, as is parsley, with the latter having two times the carotenoids that carrots contain.

Another vegetable rich in carotenoids is broccoli. Carotenoids are antioxidant-rich phytochemicals; some research suggests that carotenoids may help diminish the risk of developing certain types of cancer and may even offer some protection against macular degeneration. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, spinach has similar benefits; it is another fermentable vegetable featuring carotenoids as well as the flavones Apigenin and Luteolin. Apigenin is a natural cancer defense, while Luteolin also has cancer-fighting properties, anti-inflammatory properties, and anti-viral effects.

Essentially, the health benefits of fermented vegetables are

well documented. Looking at the benefits of consuming fermented vegetables reveal that fermented selections are a healthier alternative. Bear in mind the decision to eat fermented or regular foods shouldn't be an all or nothing choice.

Don Colbert, M.D New York Times *best-selling 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 .

Believers, the Sky Is NOT Falling

At Charisma Media, we have been closely covering the fallout from the Supreme Court's recent ruling that declared same-sex marriage as the law of the land. We have received many, many comments on our stories, some of which are predicting gloom and doom for America to come soon.

For example:

"Judgment."

"Yes, judgment!"

"Judgment will come."

"It won't be long now."

There certainly are a lot of Chicken Littles out there.

OK, suppose God's judgment is coming really soon. Just suppose that it will come at the end of the summer or early fall. Will it come in the guise of a nuclear war? Will there be a major economic collapse? How about a plague that will wipe out half of the earth, or a famine or a major earthquake?

Does that scare you? If so, you've got to ask yourself one simple question: "Am I right with God?"

This may sound very simplistic, trite and like a sermon that has been preached for years by many. But why aren't believers of Jesus Christ getting it? If the answer to the above question is yes, then what are you so worried about?

Romans 8:31 says, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" In his sermon on the mount, Jesus told the crowd, "Who among you by taking thought can add a cubit to his stature?" (Matt. 6:27).

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

My wonderful, Spirit-filled mother Florence, with whom I credit my spiritual foundation, even today corrects me when I use the word "worry" when I talk to her. "Remember what God's Word says about that, Shawn." And every time she says that, indeed I'm convicted. Thanks, Mom!

None of us wants to be around to experience a nuclear war. None of us wants to see the economy collapse like a wet noodle (it is the year of the Shemitah, after all). Nobody wants to live through a cataclysmic plague and suffer physically. Any or all of those would be, to say the least, more than a bit uncomfortable.

But what is it that we're forgetting here? Are we conveniently dismissing the fact that God has *already* defeated Satan and

that we have the victory in Jesus? “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” (1 Cor. 15:57). “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37).

Granted, I know I still have work to do on this earth. I know that I’m not finished with the task that God has so graciously given me stewardship over—to continue to spread His gospel and help bring souls into the kingdom.

There are still things that I would like to experience. Some day, I would like to see my kids graduate high school and college, and to see both my son and daughter walk down the aisle to get married. I’d like to have grandkids some day—just so I can see them mentally torture their parents (lol, just kidding of course). I would like to take my wife to Australia some day.

If those things happen, I’ll be eternally grateful to my Lord and Savior. If those things don’t happen because of the Rapture, His Second Coming or some unforeseen circumstances, then I’ll be eternally grateful to my Lord and Savior.

Fellow believers, don’t spend your time worrying about what could happen in the future. Nothing that happens to us on this earth compares to the glorious eternal life we have ahead of us. However, we need to be ready for anything that comes our way, and we need to live our lives for Christ and to be as Christ-like as we possibly can to show the rest of the world that there is something else for them besides the hollow life that they are living without Jesus.

And please stay off of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., with the negative stuff about our society. That only shows unbelievers that we are not trusting that God is in control of EVERYTHING. That tends to blow our witness, you know?

As Dr. Michael Brown tweeted this past weekend, “The moment you post with anger and immaturity and insults, even if your

cause is right, you're wrong." I also ran across the title of a book called, *Defending the Christian Faith With Holiness, Respect and Truth*, by Michael C. Sherrard. I haven't read it, but judging by the title, I'm sure I'll read it soon.

Again, it may sound simplistic, but that's really all there is to it, isn't there?

And as I always like to say, "There is that." God bless.

Shawn A. Akers is the online managing editor at Charisma Media. He is a published poet and published a story about Dale Earnhardt in NASCAR Chicken Soup For the Soul. You can read his blog [here](#).

5 Bad Child Behaviors You Need to Break Early

I hate going to the dentist. I know it's necessary, but I always put it off. It is the last thing I want to spend money on.

After several years of avoiding it, I was forced to make an appointment because of intense tooth pain. The result was exactly what I expected. Small cavities had grown into larger decay which eventually led to infection. Ultimately, smaller and cheaper cavity fixes turned into an expensive double root canal with two crowns. Routine checkups and maintenance would have prevented all of it.

In the same way, kids can develop bad habits early. Engaging those habits with consistent correction and guidance can be tiring. It can take thought and energy that can wear parents

out. However, if left unchecked, they can grow into major problems down the line. It is important to engage the problem now in order to save us and them from more intense pain in the future.

Here are some bad kid behavior issues that you need to break early:

1. Lying. This leads to a life of secrecy. Growth and maturity come when we deal honestly with our mistakes and shortcomings. We learn responsibility by owning it. Others see us as dependable, faithful, and authentic. Trust is built leading to healthy relationships. Lying has the opposite effect. Distrust and immaturity take root. On a personal level, in our house, my kids know that this is offense receives the steepest consequence because it, more than anything, causes relational separation in the family.

2. Disrespectful to authority. We are all people under authority in some way or another. Parents, teachers, government officials, elders, bosses, and police officers are some of the authorities in our lives. An attitude of disrespecting authority creates a dangerous habit in a child. It will lead to an attitude of entitlement and a lack of proper humility. They will end up suffering for it as their options are limited. Children need to learn a respectful disposition to those in authority over them. This doesn't mean they can't disagree with that authority or challenge it, particularly when the authority abuses its power. However, it is important to teach children to always submit to or challenge authority with grace and respect.

3. Unkind words. Words are important. Clearly, the words we choose affect those they are directed towards. Unkind words cause deep wounds in people. However, they can also lead our general attitude or our feelings about someone. I once made a decision to go an entire year saying only positive things about someone I had a hard time getting along with. After the

year, I felt completely different about that person. There may be time to disagree, argue, or even fight, but there is never a reason to be unkind. The earlier our kids develop a vocabulary of kind words the better.

4. Aggressive behavior. Intervene as soon as possible to prevent other children or animals from being hurt. There are many reasons for a child exhibiting aggressive behavior. It is important to find out the reason by observing and listening. Many times, it is a coping mechanism in dealing with stress or feelings of insecurity. If the behavior is allowed or reinforced, it will continue. It is best to stop it immediately when it happens, remain calm, listen to the child, and enforce consistent nonphysical consequences.

5. Laziness. Children need to be taught to take responsibility for themselves early. Otherwise, they can come to expect that their parents will do everything for them. Instilling a good work ethic starts by giving them chores to do around the house at a young age. Start by teaching them to make their bed and clean up their toys daily. When they develop a habit of taking care of their things, add a chore pertaining to a common area. Encourage and reward their work only when it deserves it. This will teach them to value and strive for good work. Starting as early as possible will make all the difference.

BJ Foster *is the content manager for All Pro Dad and a married father of two. For the original article, visit .*