

4 Ways to Make the Most of One-On-One Time With Your Kids

There's not a dad among us who doesn't find scheduling to be a challenge. We invest in our work, we invest in our commitments, and we run out of hours in a day.

Time gets away from us to the extent that we feel overwhelmed, rushed, and a little bit out of control. Then we miss out on the best investment dads can make.

Sometimes, we end up missing school stuff, family time, and more. It happens too often.

You know, those events and details that look like a small deal—until all of a sudden they're a big deal. We're stretched, we're disconnected, and we see our children grow up too fast, slipping out of our reach before we know it. Consequently—and mostly because we've missed too many small details—we see our relationships with our kids become more reactive than proactive. Not all the time, but enough to remind us that we need to make a change.

Solution: What we need is to invest more time in our kids. Not so much random or haphazard encounters, but planned quality time. It's about being intentional; it's about investing in our kids. Breakfast with dad, walking the dog together, movie night, even an overnight trip. It's about being deliberate; it's about going one-on-one.

Here are some great ideas designed to keep us ahead of the curve with our children, custom crafted to help dads stay in the loop, and have some fun too. And don't forget to write them on the calendar as a "don't miss" appointment.

1. Dog walk with dad. Try making it a habit. Twenty minutes of one-on-one time for non-agenda conversation. Small talk. Building rapport. Got more than one kid? Share the schedule. Chances are this is something they'll all look forward to. But be prepared. Real conversations could break out, so keep your phone in your pocket.

2. Breakfast with dad. Hook in with an All Pro Dad's Day at their school or simply schedule one day per week as breakfast with dad day on the way in. Variations could include ice cream night with dad or Saturday brunch while mom sleeps in. The key here is undivided, one-on-one attention. No agenda, just time.

3. Museum of the month. No matter where you live, there's some accessible culture, a state park, or a few historic sites within reach. Make exploring a go-to dad event. Let the kids be in on the research and planning. Be excited, Dad, even if you're not naturally a museum or a history kind of a guy. It's about the relationship.

4. Movie night madness. Use your imagination. You could work a theme, such as, "The best sports movies in history." "Classically awful monster films." Or "Movies that dad loved as a kid." Followed by movie analysis over a pizza.

It's about being intentional; it's about investing in our kids. The overriding, ironclad, "must not be broken" rule here is this: Give the kids 100 percent of your attention. Make "dad time" accessible and regular. Remember: It's the best investment dads can make.

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For the original article, visit .

How to Stay Fit While Traveling

Summer, at first glance, seems to be much more conducive to staying fit than winter does. Whereas in winter, we can easily blame cold weather and cozy beds for our tendency to sleep in instead of work out, in summer, the temperatures are warm (sweltering here in south Texas!), the sun is shining, bright green grasses are begging to be frolicked upon, and hiking trails and swimming pools are calling our name.

But so are vacations. And for many of us, vacations mean temptations to eat more and move less.

Most people I train have a love/hate relationship with vacations for the precise reason that they seem to have a sneaky way of undoing hard work in the gym. Leading up to their trip, they train hard and eat well, but take two steps backward the moment they arrive at their destination. **An all-or-nothing mentality takes over** when they're presented with all-you-can-eat buffets and beautiful beaches, and they return home feeling defeated by that "cheeseburger in paradise."

But vacations don't have to be defeating, I promise! In this article, I'm going to give you practical tips that will help you stay on the straight and narrow road of health and fitness while still enjoying your summer escape.

1. In the plane. It's important to start your trip off on the right foot. Before you get to your vacation spot, **set the bar high** to establish how you're going to eat for the duration of the trip.

It's no secret that airline food (*if* your airline serves

meals) is subpar in taste and nutrition. Bring what food you can from home, such as fruit, nuts, no-refrigeration-required nut butter, carrots, celery sticks, or all-natural snack bars. Pack these in your carry-on and steer clear of the airport's sugary, salty snacks.

After you've made it through security, any food you purchase can be brought onto the plane. Definitely say "No" to artificially sweetened beverages and go for the bottled water or unsweetened tea instead. Fortunately, more healthy eating establishments seem to be popping up in more and more airports, so take the time to find out where these are located and bid *bon voyage* to the fast food options.

When you're in the air, avoid soft drinks (especially diet ones!) and alcohol, as both can dehydrate you. Not only do flyers experience physiological changes related to an increase in altitude, they are also exposed to low moisture levels. Aircraft cabin humidity levels are unnaturally low, from 5-10 percent, creating an environment with less humidity than the Sahara Desert! **Water is *always* the best choice** for preventing dehydration, fatigue, lightheadedness, and jet lag, not to mention keeping cravings at bay.

2. In the car. Sitting in the car for hours on end, stopping only to use the restroom or eat a meal, can take its toll on your health and fitness fast. To avoid the lure of the golden arches, **invest in a cooler.** A big one. And fill it up with healthy snacks like raw veggies, homemade sandwiches, and fruit. Restock along the way when you have the opportunity to stop at local grocery stores or farmers markets.

For help finding healthy local eateries, try the GoodFoodNearYou app, which pinpoints the healthiest menu options at restaurants in your area, including fast food chains.

On particularly long road trips, be sure to **stop at least once**

a day for an exercise and stretching break (in that order.) Check your road map or GPS for nearby parks where you can go for a walk, or spend some time exploring a new town or city, by foot of course!

3. In the hotel. The first thing to look for while searching for a hotel is ... you guessed it ... a fitness center! Or at least a pool. Most major booking sites allow you to customize your search to show only hotels that offer certain fitness amenities.

If your hotel doesn't have a gym, bring a few pieces of home equipment along with you, such as a jump rope or resistance bands. You could even bring a workout DVD with you and do it first thing in the morning, leaving the rest of the day to focus on your itinerary!

As a lower-tech option, you can jog around the local neighborhood, or devise your own bodyweight workouts using tried and true exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups, and sit-ups!

Along with a fitness facility, you may also consider booking a room that has a kitchenette, as this will save you money on food and enable you to cook healthy meals without all the salt, butter, and unhealthy oils that many restaurants use.

4. On the ship. Cruises are arguably the worst offenders when it comes to derailing diets. They are notorious for boasting beaucoups of food at all hours of the day. However, in the midst of the pastries and pizzas, most cruise lines offer healthier options with reduced sodium, trans fats, and simple sugars. Royal Caribbean, Holland America, Carnival, and many other lines have eliminated trans fats completely from their dining rooms.

Along with giving into gluttony (let's call it for what it is), cruisers generally face the temptation to lounge by the pool instead of staying active. But on today's ships, there's

no reason not to exercise—if you have the motivation, which as believers, is derived from our desire to glorify God with our bodies. Nearly all ships have a gym and jogging track, and most also offer a number of fitness classes that passengers can take throughout their cruise. Newer ships even have ice skating rinks and rock climbing walls! There really is no excuse not to burn some calories and break a sweat while at sea.

Off the ship, choose active shore excursions, like kayaking, hiking or biking. If you do enough physical activity during the day, then you can splurge on ice cream at night guilt free (one serving will do it!).

If you're interested in a bit of light reading that will motivate you to stay on track while traveling and provide quick, bodyweight workouts, check out my book *Perfect Fit* available for the Kindle and in paperback.

Stay fit, stay faithful.

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

10 Signs You Are a Charismaniac

As a believer with a Pentecostal experience since 1978 I have seen many genuine moves of God as well as many counterfeit works of the flesh. Unfortunately, many believers lack the discernment to tell the difference between what is of God and what originates with man.

My grandmother was the pastor of a classical Pentecostal Hispanic church for over 50 years. Through that experience I was able to understand some Pentecostal roots and practices. Generally speaking, the ethnic classical Pentecostals (in every ethnic group I have come across: Italian, Spanish, African-American, Russian to name a few) were known to be very strict when it came to outward holiness, to the point that many of us called them legalistic (For example: women could not wear pants or make-up or cut their hair; no movies; no dancing; no entertainment; and even the men had a strict dress code of wearing a suit and a tie).

Out of the Pentecostal movement arose the Charismatic movement of the 1960s and 1970s in which the historic denominational churches received the second blessing (baptism of the Holy Spirit) with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

Because of the legalism associated with the word Pentecostal, many evangelicals across denominational lines have since felt more comfortable using the term "charismatic" to describe their Pentecostal experience that includes speaking in tongues, believing in divine healing, and deliverance from demonic oppression.

However, in the past decade I have witnessed so much excess in some charismatic circles that I have also felt uncomfortable at times using that term to describe my Pentecostal leanings.

Consequently, I use the term “evangelical” to describe my expression of Christianity because both “Pentecostal” and “charismatic” have a certain kind of baggage associated with them.

A classical charismatic and/or Pentecostal, in the way I am defining them, is a person who has received Christ as Lord and Savior, who stands on the word of God as the final authority, and who also believes in the manifestations of the Spirit as found in 1 Corinthians 12:4-8, as well as the gift of speaking in tongues as found in 1 Corinthians 14:2,4.

Charismatics and Pentecostals should also regularly listen to the voice of God inside of their spirit to give them wisdom (as opposed to some fundamentalist evangelicals who believe God only speaks through the written pages of the Bible).

There are other distinctions I could mention to describe a classical charismatic or Pentecostal if I had the time.

Through the years, some with the charismatic experience have become so subjective they have embraced wild fire and given charismatics a bad reputation. I understand that prominent evangelical John MacArthur is having some kind of conference dealing with “strange fire” related to the charismatic movement. But I am skeptical of a critique coming from a person historically biased against Pentecostals. (Also, I would much rather have “strange fire” than no fire at all!) I would rather hear from a practicing charismatic or Pentecostal. Hence, today’s subject for this article is related to 10 erroneous beliefs or practices from among some in the charismatic camp.

The following are 10 signs you are involved in charismania or are a charismaniac:

(The vast majority of charismatics I know do not believe or practice any of the following.)

1. You put prophecies and extra-biblical leadings on the same level as the written Word of God. Isaiah 8:20 says if we speak not according to the Scripture then we have no light. Second Timothy 3:16 teaches that all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness. The Scriptures are our rule for life and the highest standard for judging truth.

Unfortunately, some in the charismatic camp seem to be led more by personal prophecies and supernatural visions and dreams than by the Scriptures. I have known some people who would record personal prophecies by well-known “prophets” and—without praying about it or comparing it to Scripture or getting discerning counsel from more seasoned leaders in the kingdom—would just obey the prophecy as if it were as inspired as the Bible.

There are some others who seem to be getting daily visions and dreams from God that guide them. While I do believe God can speak through visions and dreams, we have to be careful because Satan also comes as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and can deceive naïve believers who think that just because they have a supernatural encounter that it must be the Lord. Paul said that even if an angel from heaven appears and preaches another gospel let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8).

The more sure word of prophecy comes from the inspired writings of the canonical books of both the Old and New Testaments, which should be our guiding light for life (2 Peter 1:19-21) and by which all prophetic utterances should be judged. If the prophetic word or supernatural vision doesn't go against the Scriptures, then we still need to pray and get a witness from the Lord in our spirit as well as get counsel from mature leaders as to whether this specific prophetic word or vision is really specific guidance from Him (The Scriptures cannot always give us specific guidance but provide general principles and precepts).

Lest my non-charismatic friends gloat over this point, let me say that a totally objective human being does not and cannot exist. All humans are subjective, even the non-charismatics who believe God only speaks to us through the Bible. The only truly objective being in the universe is God because He is the only one who is never influenced by time, space or environment! Even fundamentalist cessationists (those who believe the gifts of the Spirit and speaking in tongues ceased after the first century of the church) are subjective because they believe they are saved because they have "a witness in their spirit" that they are children of God (Romans 8:16).

Since we can't avoid subjectivity then how do we determine biblical truth? The only way to know the truth is to trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us and our leaders into all truth when we study the Scriptures, as well as the fact we have a responsibility to read how the believing church down through the centuries has interpreted the word historically. Hence, when there is a consensus from the evangelical church regarding the interpretation of a passage or truth of the Bible then we can have general assurance that the Holy Spirit has illuminated this truth to His people.

2. You are blindly led by charismatic leaders. Although this can be the case for the non-charismatic world as much as the charismatic world, as a charismatic I am going to pick on my own camp. I have seen far too many believers get caught up in following the teachings of charismatic leaders, even if their leaders are not living moral lives. There have been leaders who endorse political candidates who push anti-biblical laws; charismatics not only follow them but vote like them! There have been charismatics who are getting divorced unbiblically and remarrying, or living lavish opulent lifestyles with no accountability.

But, because they have "charisma," move in the gifts of the Spirit and have a great preaching anointing, people follow them without question! Many churches have devolved into

nothing more than personality cults and are led by charismatic leaders who could preach heresy with much of the church still shouting amen and hallelujah.

On the Day of judgment God will hold each of us accountable for our lives, our families and our callings. We will not be able to give an excuse for being led astray by a leader if we have not taken the time to study the Scriptures and seek God for ourselves.

3. You come to church looking for experiences more than Jesus. Many in charismatic churches come to church to “feel” God’s presence because it makes them feel good. That is all good and fine for new believers but we must get to where we want to know the person of God and not just feel the presence of God. (For example, I want to know my wife’s heart, not just smell her perfume or feel her physical embrace.) Only when we know God (John 17:3) can we make Him known.

4. You think weird physical gyrations or manifestations are necessary to experience when “in the Spirit.” There have been some so-called revivals or renewal movements in Pentecostal and charismatic churches (even in classical Pentecostal churches) in which people think the Holy Spirit is moving upon a person because they start jerking, going into weird gyrations, barking like a dog, clucking like a chicken, dancing in the Spirit, running, spinning, etc. When I first preached in a classical Pentecostal church I thought someone was having an epileptic attack but then someone told me it was the Holy Ghost upon them.

While I am sure the Holy Spirit does at times move upon us in such a way that we have a strong physical, emotional and psychological reaction to the raw power and presence of God (which has happened to me on several occasions), I am convinced that many people try to manufacture a move of God upon themselves that is nothing more than Pentecostal hype and a work of the flesh.

God does not have to operate in such a manner in order to speak to us or move upon us. Some of my most powerful experiences in Christ have been hearing His gentle, still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-13) during times of intimate worship or just fellowshiping with Him as I went about my daily routine.

In my opinion, sometimes unstable people, in their zeal for God, give in to their emotions and manifest weirdness in the name of the Lord, which is nothing but a work of the flesh (and in some cases can be demonic). Furthermore, I have seen whole churches celebrate these weird manifestations as moves of God resulting in only attracting charismatic kooks from other churches with very few unbelievers getting converted.

5. You focus on soaking in the Spirit rather than being empowered by the Spirit to be a witness. According to Acts 1:8 the primary purpose of Spirit baptism is to be empowered to be a witness of the resurrection of Christ. Thus, the power of the Spirit has a missional focus, not a self-centered focus. Many charismatics think the Spirit has come upon them to make them feel good and all they want to do is come to church to “soak in the presence of God.” But my Bible teaches me that every single time a human being encountered the presence of God it resulted in God sending out that person to do work for His kingdom. (For example: Moses and the burning bush experience of Exodus 3; Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 2:1-3; Paul in Acts 22:14-15).

The book of Acts could also be called the book of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit is active in every aspect of the work of the church; the focus of the book of Acts is action, not feelings and not even teachings! It is not called the book of theories but the book of Acts for a reason! Even when the Antiochian church was corporately worshipping God, the Holy Spirit sent out two of their best leaders to preach the gospel (Acts 13:1-2).

Charismaniacs are self-focused on soaking, not on being sent by God!

6. You are mystical and are not practical. The Bible is the most practical book in the world about stewarding the earth; it is not a book about heaven or focused on mystical things. When we are heavenly minded we are of earthly good (Colossians 3:1-3).

Charismaniacs are constantly having experiences, interpreting numbers, sequences, dreams, and visions in their lives and spiritualizing everything to the point in which they don't accomplish very much on the earth! Every spiritual or mystical experience that does not directly result in either me knowing God more intimately or being equipped to serve Him better in this world is a waste of time and not worth my attention.

7. You claim to speak to the saints in heaven. I have heard some leaders who have claimed to have conversations with the Old Testament patriarch Abraham and the Apostle Paul and other departed saints of old. This is dangerous and can lead to the saint worship heresy of the Roman Catholic tradition. First Timothy 2:5 says there is only one mediator between God and men: the man Jesus Christ. I don't need to speak to Paul, Mary, Abraham or any of the saints of old. Jesus assigned the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and to take of His and reveal it unto us (John 14:26; 16:14). Not even a heaven-abiding Paul the Apostle could do better than the Holy Spirit.

8. You always claim angelic appearances. Once I was asked to conduct a television interview with a person called the "Angel Lady." I turned it down because I did not want my name associated with this nonsense, as well as the fact that I would not have been a good host but would have seriously challenged her views and embarrassed her in public.

I don't need anyone teaching me how to connect to my "guardian angel." The only angel I want to know is the Angel of the Lord

who encamps around those who fear the Lord (Psalm 34:7), whom many scholars believe is none other than Jesus Christ.

Although I know I have angels going before me when I do the work of the kingdom, it is not my responsibility to get to know them or give them orders. The Word of God teaches me to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18) and never admonishes me to get to know my guardian angel. This kind of foolishness can lead to angelic worship, which the Apostle Paul said would disqualify us (Colossians 2:18)! Although Hebrews 1:14 says that angels are sent to serve believers, Psalm 91:11 teaches that God is the one who commands them, not me! Giving angels orders bypasses the protocol of prayer that instructs us to approach the Father in the name of Jesus when we have need of something (John 16:23-24). The Bible says nothing regarding believers speaking or commanding angels. God is the Lord of Hosts and He knows best how to dispense His angelic army!

9. You lack biblical depth and doctrinal soundness. Few are the saints in the church that are like the Bereans who searched the Scriptures to see whether or not what Paul the Apostle was preaching was true (Acts 17:11).

Charismaniacs are driven by emotions, subjective feelings and very rarely crack open the Bible for serious study! The less knowledge of the Word you have, the less discernment you will have to know when thoughts and imaginations coming into your brain are from the Lord or from the devil (read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Consequently, charismaniacs are susceptible to false teachings and false prophets who can deceive them with false signs and wonders and unbiblical teachings (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

Jesus told the religious leaders of His day they were in error because they knew not the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matthew 22:29). In my opinion, the Scriptures were mentioned first by Jesus because Scripture has to frame our power

encounters so we can have proper discernment! No Scripture equals no discernment, and no discernment equals potential deception.

10. You are independent from the Body of Christ because you are “led by the Spirit.” I have known several charismaniacs who are not connected to any one local church but just float around from church to church because, they told me, they are being led by the Spirit. People like this will never fully mature in the Lord because, like a seed, you have to be planted in the ground in order to reach your potential. (Psalm 92:13 says that being planted in the house of the Lord precedes flourishing!) Even Jesus needs a body to fulfill His present mission (Ephesians 1:22-23). Those not committed to one local church are like a person who dismembers their hands and then expects them to function on their own.

In conclusion, the vast majority of charismatic/Pentecostal believers I know love the Lord. It is these kinds of churches that are expanding global Christianity. Without the charismatic/Pentecostal camp the church would be dead and on the road to extinction by now.

My purpose in writing this article is not to “throw the baby out with the bathwater,” but to encourage the church to embrace the true purpose of Pentecost (Acts 1:8) and discard foolishness that will hinder kingdom advancement.

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What Is the Antidote for ObamaCare?

Americans are increasingly getting fed up with the insurance-based medical system. It often means long waits for appointments and doctors who seem to have one eye on the patient and the other eye on the clock.

That's why many primary care doctors and patients are turning away from insurance and to what's known as concierge medicine.

When it comes to healthcare, Johnny Guerry prefers old school, meaning just he and his doctor calls the shots without any input from an insurance company.

"It's been fantastic," Guerry said.

Unlimited Access

With concierge medicine, patients pay their primary care physician an out-of-pocket monthly fee, sometimes an annual fee, in exchange for unlimited access, 24/7.

Concierge medicine used to be something only for the rich and famous. But according to Dr. James Pinckney, known to his patients as "Dr. James," that's not the case any longer.

"We're trying to obliterate that stigma and make sure people in this country understand that concierge medicine, or what we're calling 'direct medicine,' is affordable, and something that everybody should strive for," Pinckney explained.

Where he works at Diamond Physicians in Dallas, adults pay from \$95 to \$295 each month, based on age. That covers all acute procedures and medications.

“Let’s say they fell and cut their hand. They come in; we sew them up. Well, that laceration repair is an acute procedure. It’s included in that low monthly fee,” he explained.

“If they get a stomach bug and they need I-V fluids and let’s say some nausea medication, that’s an acute medication. It’s included,” he continued. “If they have a fracture and they need to come up to our office and have a splint placed, that’s included.”

Outside Services

Sometimes patients have to pay extra for services outside the office, like a CT scan. But doctors negotiate cash rates with those third-party vendors that are a fraction of what they bill insurance.

“So for an MRI we pass those savings onto our clients,” Pinckney said. “Four hundred dollars instead of \$4,000, X-rays for \$60 instead of \$500, CBC—which is a blood check—\$5, cholesterol check, \$6 instead of \$126.”

The cost for children is even less than adults. Each child costs \$45 a month for unlimited access to their doctor. Liza Schlitt says her two young boys usually need medical attention after hours.

“It’s funny, I feel like my children only get sick on the nights and weekends when the offices are closed,” she said. “So they’re available via text message, emails, whatever form of communication is most convenient for you. They answer immediately.”

“I really have never waited more than five minutes maximum for a return response. It is amazing,” she said.

Doctors recently gave her son Griffin a breathing treatment, prescription and a nebulizer to take home, all covered by the monthly fee—and on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

Doctor's Full Attention

Perhaps the biggest difference between concierge medicine and insurance-based medicine is the time patients spend with their doctors.

The Affordable Care Act flooded offices of already overloaded primary care physicians to the point where face-time with doctors can average as little as eight minutes per visit.

"I can't do anything effective in eight minutes, except throw a prescription at you and tell you to come back and see me in two weeks if it doesn't work," Dr. Anthony Lyssy, also with Diamond Physicians, said.

Primary care doctors who accept insurance treat on average about 3,000 patients. This is known as a doctor's patient panel.

The typical concierge physician has a patient panel of about 500 patients. At Diamond, the doctors promise their patients their patient panel will never exceed 600. This ensures each patient has their doctor's undivided attention.

"I meet with my clients for about an hour every time they come in," Lyssy said. "Even if they're coming in for something acute—a sinus infection, an ear infection—I take that time to talk about wellness, nutrition, fitness, overall elevation of health."

Supplemental Insurance

Although concierge medicine involves paying cash for day-to-day health expenses, doctors do recommend their patients buy health insurance, but with a high deductible.

"Then use that insurance should you get in a car accident and have a 10-day hospital stay with a \$100,000 bill," Lyssy said. "That \$6,000 or \$7,000 deductible looks awfully nice at that point."

So as insurance-based healthcare complicated this crucial need, more patients and doctors are going old school, with a cash-only plan, similar to the way it was a half-century ago.

For the original article, visit .

10 Keys to Raising a Great Teen

There are many parents who fear their children's teenage years. That fear may be merited because these are the years that the relationship between the kid and the family is being redefined.

The importance of friends rises for them, while the parents and siblings fall. The fruit of your labor is not as easily seen as it once was. In some cases, it may even seem like your influence is outright rejected. If so, hang in there. Your work is not in vain. This period can prove to be the most rewarding and most vibrant phase of parenting.

Here are 10 keys to raising a great teenager:

1. Encourage their faith. Young people are consistently being told that their worth is determined by how they look and perform. Encouraging their faith in that their value comes from the God that created them gives them permission and confidence to be themselves. It will also affirm their moral character.

2. Under all the scowls and frowns, your child is still there. Even when they are dismissing you, there is a place deep down that is relieved you are there looking out for them. They

still need your attention and acknowledgement. They may want more space, but they still want you to pursue them. Don't let your hurt feelings stop you from doing it. That phase will end. Study them and how they are changing. Affirm their growth.

3. Let your love show. All the love and affection they needed when they were younger, they still need now. Loving your kid means you need to find ways to express your love through your actions and words. Don't leave your teen wondering where you stand on them. They may reject you, but a loving father never rejects his kids.

4. Don't talk at your teens. All day they are being lectured by adults, many of whom care more about their own agenda than the kids. It's exhausting for teens and causes them to not trust adults. Recognize that fatigue is there. When disciplining or giving your teens advice, talk to them as adults. Also, keep it clear and concise.

5. Remember to listen. This statement ties in with the one above. Few adults respect and listen to teens. When you listen to your teen, they feel empowered. They feel that they have a voice.

6. Reinforce a standard within teens. Children aren't born knowing what's right. As they get older, teens face pressure to abandon or want to experiment outside the moral standards given to them when they were younger. It's not only important to remind them what they were taught in their younger, but give practical reasons why there are boundaries. Don't be afraid to be the one they blame to their friends as strict. They may actually be thanking you internally.

7. Get to know their friends. Teens want to choose their friends. Ask them questions about them and listen. Try to get to know their friends. Create an environment at your house that makes other kids want to gather there. Get to know their

friends' parents and family.

8. Offer your wisdom. Being a dad, you automatically have a gift of wisdom because you lived longer than your teenagers. They probably will never admit that you were right or that they don't know everything. However, you are a source of wisdom they need.

9. Help them stay focused. Help them find a balance between enjoying the immediate and looking towards the future. It's easy to forget the consequences of our current choices. Teach them the joy of delayed gratification. Everything isn't about the Friday night football games or Senior Prom.

10. Take them on an adventure. Nothing earns the right with a teenager like doing something adventurous together. Take them to a high ropes course, go camping, or whitewater rafting. Taking them out of their comfort zone and yours will increase their bond with you.

What has been the most challenging thing about raising your teenager?

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [.](#)

When Spell Casters Invade Your Prayer Room

Is there really a revival of the devil's witchcraft? Does the devil really take out all the stops to interfere with the prayers of the saints? Does the devil always overplay his hand?

The answer to all of these questions, of course, is yes. Yes, he does.

Earlier this year, we started our Mornings With the Holy Spirit devotion and prayer calls at 6 a.m. One of my intercessors felt strongly there were unbelievers on the line one morning and some days there is clearly enemy resistance to our prayers. Of course, we always press through and God brings refreshing, inspiration and revelation despite what the devil has in mind.

On the call each morning, I encourage the listeners to leave a prayer request at . Every day, we get a number of prayer requests for healing, reconciliation in marriages, financial breakthrough and more. Recently, though, the spell casters have invaded the site. Indeed, the prince of the power of the air has reared his ugly head at . Thankfully, none of the requests go live since everything is monitored.

Spell Casters Looking for a Following

“Hello friends! My Name is Wendy from Canada I have had a lot about Dr. Sambo on his good work, for bringing back lost relationship but I never believe because so many spell caster scam me because of my husband who left me and three kids over a year and two months,” reads one of the witchcraft requests.

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This person goes on to offer a testimony of how this Dr. Sambo told her not to worry, that her husband would come back and they would birth a baby boy. The testimony ends happily. The marriage was restored and she has a “new bouncy baby boy” and is the “happiest woman on earth.” Then the spell caster, who concocted this story, leaves his email address. Can you say scam?

Many others with fake names rave about this “powerful spell

caster.” But it seems there’s some competition in the witchcraft camp because others who try to work their way onto the site are praising Dr. Benedict as the ultimate spell caster, who successfully casts love spells. Still others point to a man named Ezzia, the “very good love spell caster” and Dr. Ekaka. Oh, and let’s not forget about Dr. Aisabu. All of these witches are trying to advertise their services at and the volume has increased over the last few weeks. Again, none of these ever make it on to the site because we moderate the comments. But the devil sure is persistent.

Driving Out the Spell Casters

I understand the pull from hurting people to turn to psychics, tarot card readers, palm readers, crystal readers or telephone fortuneteller hotlines looking for answers. Before I was saved, and after my husband abandoned me, I ran up quite a large phone bill with a television psychic I hoped would have answers that never came.

People are hungry for the supernatural. They are hungry for the prophetic. I can’t find any statistics on the proliferation of psychic shops promising \$5 readings, but anecdotally I can witness to the rise of these shops in my city and I see them in cities all over the country when I travel. Meanwhile, church attendance in America is declining. It’s time for the church to be the church. Lives are at stake. We need a great awakening in this nation, not a revival of the devil’s witchcraft.

God made it clear: “There must not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or who uses divination, or uses witchcraft, or an interpreter of omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts spells, or a spiritualist, or an occultist, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God will drive them out from before you” (Deut. 18:10-12).

So what do you do when spell casters try to invade your prayer room—or your church or your city? Drive them out from before you. But let's go a step further and pray that God would break the deception off their minds. Whether they are spell casting for profit or just for fun, it's likely they were taught this abominable lifestyle by someone else—some evil-inspired person sucked them in. God hates the practice but still loves the person.

Pray that God would rescue them from the devil's snare.

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.

Study: Women Turning to Alternative Medicine to Combat Menopause

Women are increasingly turning to alternative and complementary medicine to treat menopausal symptoms. In fact, new research shows about half of American women use at least some form of unconventional therapy, often without the guidance of a doctor.

The findings, published in *Menopause*, the journal of the North American Menopause Society, suggest that family practitioners and other health care providers educate themselves on such treatments and take a more active role in guiding patients through their options.

The researchers suggested fear of the potential risks of hormone therapy is a primary reason for the growing use of alternative medicine in recent decades.

Among the most common unconventional treatments women seek are: massage, naturopathy, herbal medicine, chiropractic or osteopathic treatments, acupuncture, vitamins/mineral supplements, yoga, meditation, aromatherapy oils and traditional Chinese therapies.

The new study estimated that 53 percent of menopausal women use at least one type of alternative therapy for the management of such menopause-related symptoms as hot flashes, night sweats, anxiety, depression, stiff or painful joints, back pain, headaches, tiredness, vaginal discharge, leaking urine and palpitations.

“There is still much to be learned in the [alternative medicine] arena and women need to understand that just because something appears natural does not necessarily mean it is without risk, especially for certain populations,” said Wulf Utian, M.D., medical director of the North American Menopause Society.

“In the meantime, this study does a good job of alerting clinicians to the growing interest in [medical] alternatives and of the critical role of health providers in helping educate patients on the potential risks and benefits of all options.”

For the original article, visit .

'Destroying' Your Outer Man Takes Holy Spirit Discipline

Do you ever sometimes wonder why your walk with God falls short of your own expectations and why your spiritual life is so unfulfilling?

Chinese evangelist and author Watchman Nee once wrote: "Many of God's servants are not able to do even the most elementary works. Ordinarily they should be enabled by the exercise of their spirit to know God's Word, to discern the spiritual condition of another, to send forth God's messages under anointing and to receive God's revelations. Yet, due to the distractions of the outward man, their spirit does not seem to function properly. It is basically because their outward man has never been dealt with. For this reason revival, zeal, pleading and activity are but a waste of time. As we shall see, there is just one basic dealing which can enable man to be useful before God : brokenness."

Brokenness. It's not a word with which many, including followers of Jesus Christ, have made themselves familiar. Why? Could it perhaps be that brokenness is closely associated with discipline, submission and humility—a trio of concepts that are foreign to our selfish human nature?

For the true believer, such an ideal should not seem so far-fetched. After all, as John Piper so eloquently put it in his book *Desiring God*, "... there is no calling greater than praising God. This is true not only for us, but surprisingly also for God himself, he being the greatest, to glory in anything else would be idolatry. Therefore, if the greatest thing God can do is give himself glory, and nothing any

created thing does can be greater than God, the greatest thing we can do (our purpose, you might say) is to glorify him.”

Colossians 1:16 backs that up by saying, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers. All things were created by Him and for Him.”

The problem with that is, due to our flawed human nature, our outward man and our inward man “are not one,” as Nee so adamantly points out in his book, *The Releasing of the Spirit*. Nee says that “the breaking of the outward man is the basic experience of all who serve God,” and that “this must be accomplished before He can use us in an effectual way.”

Our American way of life has lulled us into such a state of comfort and complacency that many of us are simply not familiar with the concept of brokenness.

Our American way of life has lulled us into such a state of comfort and complacency that many of us are simply not familiar with the concept of brokenness. Our compassion for God and for his work has been overwhelmed by our big-screen televisions, our fascination with cars, our compulsion to know what’s going on with Caitlyn (Bruce) Jenner, our desire to dine at nice restaurants and our obsession with college and professional sports. We’re more concerned about which four teams are going to make the college football playoff than spreading the gospel and drawing the lost into God’s kingdom.

Can we at least be honest about that?

If the outer man, which is much more fascinated with the things above than the matters of God, remains unbroken, then one’s inner man may be, as Nee says, “inert and unable to function.” Thus, as Nee explains, “the breaking of the outward man is the first lesson for everyone who would learn to serve

God. He who is truly used by God is one whose outward thought and outward emotion do NOT act independently. If we have not learned this lesson, we shall find our effectiveness greatly impaired.”

In other words, we need for God to bring us to a place where the outward man is completely broken. And how does that happen?

It happens simply by submitting to God, as James 4:7 instructs us, and by drawing near to Him, according to James 4:8. While it is contrary to human nature to relinquish control of our everyday lives, we must do this to become the powerful spiritual warrior for Christ that many of us aspire to be. We need to yield to His authority and will, commit our lives to Him and his control and be willing to, “... deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24).

We need to “resist the devil.” Don’t allow Satan to entice and tempt you. We need to “cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.” That is, be cleansed from sin, replacing our desire to sin with a desire to experience God’s purity.

We need to repent. Don’t be afraid to express deep, heartfelt sorrow for your sins. And, we need to “humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift You up:” (James 4:10).

I certainly include myself in the “we need to do these things” category. I have wasted a lot of precious time—both mine and God’s—in my nearly 49 years of life. In the last few months, however, I have committed myself to “destroying” my outer man and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide my inner man.

I have read many books concerning the Holy Spirit, including the above-mentioned Nee offering as well as Lee Grady’s *The Holy Spirit is Not For Sale*. As a matter of fact, Lee loaned Nee’s book to me, and I’m grateful. The wisdom in these books have prompted me to seek a more intimate relationship with my Creator through His Word and prayer. I am seeking all of the

gifts of the Spirit the Bible promises can be given to me.

I realize all of that will come with great sacrifice, but it's time. And, it's time for all of us believers to show the world who we belong to. "So, seeing that you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14:12).

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.

Is It Your Fault Your Kids Act the Way They Do?

A couple months ago, I learned a huge lesson when it comes to the behavior of my kids. I am very much responsible for their behavior ... both the good and the bad.

So, when my kids are acting up in public, at school or even in church, I shouldn't be looking at them. I should be looking in the mirror.

I learned this lesson, with some help from my wife, after analyzing both my actions and our 5-year-old's actions on two separate mornings. One particular morning, we were getting prepared for our homeschooling group to meet for class, and we were running late as usual.

I had enough and morphed into Drill Sergeant Dad. I barked instructions, stormed around and pretty much threw a 40-year-

old tantrum at my wife and kids. Well, the barking, yelling and just all-around-crazy behavior didn't go unnoticed. Our 5-year-old was just not himself that day. He wouldn't listen, he was pouty and he was outright rebellious at some points throughout the day. I just thought it was him; that is, until about a week later when we had a completely opposite experience.

On that day, our son was being baptized, and I was the one who had the honor to do it. Talk about the greatest day ever! Well, I was so proud of his decision and just overjoyed at what was to take place that I was the most patient, the most kind, the most understanding husband and father you'd ever run into.

Our morning, as far as running behind, was normal. We weren't ready to leave at the time I'd hope we would. However, I chose to look at things with a completely different perspective, and my actions followed. And our son was an angel that day. Here are three things I did differently:

1. I chose my words carefully. The way I spoke to him, his siblings and my wife was totally different. I was not Drill Sergeant Dad. Instead I was kind and careful with my words. My wife has shared how I can be more effective with my words by doing the following: Encourage the behavior you want versus discouraging the behavior you don't want.

2. I chose grace. As I said we weren't ahead of schedule, but still running a little behind. However, instead of condemning my wife and kids, I showed grace to them. This is very much related to choosing our words. When we choose grace, we choose to focus on what is good and encourage it. Grace allows for mistakes to happen without condemnation.

3. I chose to look at the big picture. It didn't matter what went wrong that day. My son had accepted the gift of salvation that comes through a relationship with Jesus Christ. No matter

what happened, this was an amazing and wonderful thing. Nothing was going to change that.

I admit I didn't consciously do those things; but now, with the knowledge of what happened, I can in the future. And so can you. So the next time your kid's behavior is not what you like, look in the mirror first, and choose to do and say some things differently.

Share a time when your behavior brought out the best in your kid's behavior.

Jackie Bledsoe is an author, blogger and speaker. But, first and foremost, he is husband and father of three who helps men better lead and love the ones who matter most.

For the original article, visit .

Chuck Pierce: The Storm Winds Are Coming

Last Sunday, there was such a powerful release of the spirit of prophecy. We are in times of contending, and times to hear and move in a new way!

“I would bring to you new opportunities in the days ahead. Even very quickly—in the very near future—you will have a time to pour out that which I'm giving you. You will have a new opportunity to get into. Don't hold back! Don't hold back! For if you do hold back then you will miss that which will rise up, and you will miss activating seeds for your future.

“Get ready, for this pouring out is coming to you. The opportunities on your path I've already ordered. Get ready,

for this will be a time of ordering your steps so that your steps align with the steps that I have already set in place. And in this moment you'll see the end, but you'll see the beginning even before you step into it. So know this: Watch as I give you the opportunity to activate your beginning from the end.

Rising Rivers Point to Overflow of Blessings

“Rising rivers indicate the overflow of blessings! New deposits of blessings are coming! Open your eyes, because with rising water levels you will see many things die because they will be suffocated out as the water rises. But you will also see many things come to life that have never come to life. Additionally, you will see new deposits and many other things exposed—including snakes and lots of creatures moving to higher ground. Know that I am now changing the course of the land!

“I am re-aligning your diaphragm, the diaphragm of the body of Christ, that part that is covering the womb. I am putting a new sound in it. I am expanding your ability to breathe in My wind, and you will be fire-starters. You will begin to manifest the fullness of My fire, of your worship, of your time with Me, of the time that you're aligning your diaphragm with Me. I will breathe over the face of the earth and fire will begin to break out.

“I have shaken the heavens over you and am coming with a glory that is from Heaven, to shake the earth. This shaking and glory will cause the contractions to start, and those birth pangs to come forth. As My glory comes, it will birth new things. For I am doing a new thing in the earth and it is now shaking the heavens. I'm coming with My glory to shake the earth.

“For indeed I am releasing the sound—the sound that captivate men with the power of mystery. For man has been captivated

with the wrong mystery, but I am bringing sound to the body of Christ and into the land. I will spin the mystery sound that will revive the land, that will demonstrate who the Mighty One of Israel is. So get ready for the true sound of mystery that the body will release and make the land come alive!

The Wind of My Spirit Is Reaching Into Caves

“The wind of My Spirit is reaching into the caves. My wind will originate in the caves and begin to draw out what has been hidden. Many of you have been in the cave, but this is a time where I am blowing you out into a place that you’ve not been before. So even if you’ve been hidden, you must set your sail, for I will find and re-align My people this hour. There are great winds that will be coming through the lands.

“Through this September, record where the great winds start blowing! For it is from those places that I am now beginning to push out what has been hidden. I’ll blow many out of office, and blow others into office. This is a day of My blowing!

“You need to know when to brace yourself and when to let go and ride the wind. Cry out for the grace to know the difference, so you follow when you need to let go and brace yourself when you need to stand.

“You are in the midst of contrary winds. But do not back down from those winds but lean into that resistance. In your quiet and in your still times My breath will nudge you forward in the path you’re supposed to take. And when you encounter doors that are closed, My breath will increase and I will blow open those doors before you. And when you come to fortified gates, even as gates that surrounded Babylon were many feet thick, My breath becomes a whirlwind that will smash those gates wide open. They will even come off the hinges and never close up against you again. So walk in faith and believe that I have set a path before you and will make a way for you with My

breath.

There Will Be a Big Shaking

“Know that there will be big shaking in these next few weeks in world structures. Watch for big shakings! There will be much financial rearrangement. There are huge shakings coming, but the minute you go through the shaking you will begin to say ‘I know how to find my footing in this new place!’ There is a resistance! There is a resistance rising up in My people against those things that are weakening them. Let your resistance arise! Many would say that the earth is a great dynamic, great dimension, great demonstration, the sphere. But in that day you will recognize and say it is a small world after all.

“The storm winds are coming, and floods are rising. Many of you would prefer to sing the song, ‘Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream ... life is but a dream.’ And yet many are still trying to row, row, row the same way they have always rowed.

“You must learn to adjust to the wind, adjust to the shaking, and allow yourself to be moved in a different way. Now is your time to row in a different way! Some of you need to get a new motor. Some of you have the capacity to turn the direction. Some of you need to let your sail up and quit trying to control when you put it up, and when you bring it down! Some of you need to kick into high gear and move on in. Now just grab the wind.

“When My disciples were in the boat rowing all night in the midst of the storm, a time came for them to stop rowing and to stop contending with the storm! When they stopped their rowing, I could bring them to their point of destination. This is a time to learn how to row differently. This is a rowing of rest! This is not a rowing of sweat, nor a time to do more! The more reports you listen to ... won't solve your problems or

cross you into your next place. Rather, My rest will position you where you need to go!

Everyone Is Not Receiving the Rain I'm Sending

“Everyone is not receiving the rain that I'm sending. You have cried out for more, but you don't know your own capacity. I'm causing you to know your own capacity even though it seems like a flood. I'm giving you that which you can contain. You've limited and capped it off in seasons past, but now is the time for the river to arise in you!

“I have said to watch the places that flood since that would be where Holy Spirit would begin to move. [This was prophesied during the Feast of Tabernacles in 2006]. Is it a surprise that Texas has received so much in rain in May that it would cover the entire state to a depth of eight inches? Now is your time to declare a new beginning of the Holy Spirit in Texas!

“So be still and enter into the supernatural dimension that I am in. Be still, oh, be still—it's supernatural. Even the earth will respond and answer heaven; the earth will answer heaven—it's supernatural. So get ready for the ride, and throw your hands up high; throw your hands up high, and get ready for the ride! It's supernatural—you can't control it ... you can just go with it. You can't control—you can just go with. So throw your hands up, throw your hands up high, throw your hands up in the air and enjoy the ride.

“It's not the mystery of lawlessness, not the mystery of iniquity, but the mystery and the hope of Christ in you. It's not the mystery of lawlessness, not the mystery of iniquity, it's the mystery of Christ in you. This is our hope, this is our song; this is our hope, and we sing it all the day long. This is our hope, this is our song; oh, the mystery of Christ in you, we sing it all day long. There's more of God than your hands can hold! There's more of God than your mind can know! There's more of God than your heart can apprehend! So reach

out and seek more of Him.

Windows Are Opening Up Even Now

“As you are praising, arise out of the depth of your hearts. My windows are opening up even now in a greater way than you’ve ever experienced. So prepare your house for the multiplication of people, the multiplication of resources, the multiplication of success, the multiplication of My presence. For I have glorious benefits that you know not of. Prepare yourself for the glorious benefits that I will be sending your way!

“Port cities, prepare yourselves! For even now I will rearrange the trade structures that are being brought in. I will rearrange the way you are doing things, and I will bring some new ships in. There will be an uncovering of what is being brought into this nation. I am re-aligning the trade routes. Watch the hurricanes this year as they form. For as the hurricanes are now beginning to form in heaven during this ‘whirlwind’ year, you will now see the movement of these hurricanes come into earth by August. And you’ll see a movement and new routes and alignments begin to form.”

(Spoken by: Chuck Pierce, Anne Tate, Raymond Banks, Fernando Rodriguez, Acijam Otxoa, Diane Roussel, LeAnn Squier, Sylvia Sizemore, Bob McGregor, James Vincent, Robyn Vincent, Robert Heidler, Allen Faubion, Sheryl Price)

Charles D. “Chuck” Pierce serves as President of Global Spheres, Inc. (GSI) in Corinth, Texas. This is an apostolic, prophetic ministry that is being used to gather and mobilize the worshipping Triumphant Reserve throughout the world. Chuck also serves as President of Glory of Zion International Ministries, a ministry that aligns Jew and Gentile. He is known for his accurate prophetic gifting which helps direct nations, cities, churches and individuals in understanding the times and seasons in which we live. Chuck and his wife, Pam,

have six children and seven grandchildren. He has authored over 20 books, including the best-sellers Interpreting the Times, Redeeming the Time, and Time to Defeat the Devil.