

Couples Who Sweat Together Stay Together

Last night, our gym CrossFit 925 hosted a date night for couples. I cooked up a fun, challenging, total-body workout (of which I will share an at-home version at the end of this post!), and then Big'z, a nearby burger joint, cooked up dinner for us to enjoy as a fitness family.

Sure, it may not have been the most romantic date night ever (no red roses were given, serenades sung, or candles lit), but it wasn't without its love-enhancing benefits!

A growing body of evidence suggests that couples who sweat together really do stay together! Check out a few of these facts:

Working out with your significant other can increase your happiness with your relationship.

Lab studies show that after jointly participating in an exciting physical challenge or activity, couples report feeling more satisfied with their relationships and more in love with their partner. What better way to reap these positive effects than by working out?

It's the physiological arousal (as opposed to the novelty or challenge of the activity) that nurtures romantic attraction. This suggests that sharing a fitness goal, such as training for a half marathon, taking swing dance lessons, or having a date night at the CrossFit gym down the road can boost the quality of your romantic relationship.

In other words, exercising with your partner can improve the efficiency of your workouts.

There's a concept in social psychology that holds that the

mere presence of someone else affects your ability to do an activity. Even if you have already perfected pull-ups or can leap over hurdles in your sleep, bringing your significant other to the gym with you could be a wonderful way to boost your energy output. Having your partner there will improve your strength and speed without you even being aware of it! However, if you're brand new to a particular mode of exercise, it may be best to do it solo until you achieve a more intermediate level. Otherwise, your partner's presence may distract you during a challenging task. Take a little time to get comfortable and confident with your activity of choice, then bring your partner along for that performance boost.

Getting fit with your romantic flame can help you achieve your goals.

When you and your partner care about one another's fitness, it becomes easier to reach your goals. A recent study of heterosexual couples showed that average-weight husbands who care about fitness engage in more physical activity when their wives offer more supportive health-related comments. Celebrating one another's victories, be it breaking a personal record for push-ups or giving up diet soda, as well as picking each other up when they stumble or feel discouraged, can provide the perfect context for such uplifting conversation.

Fitness can be a personal habit of yours, or it can be an invaluable asset, an irreplaceable ally, to your most important relationship. Why not share fitness with the one you love most, either daily, or occasionally? I believe you'll be blessed as you discover that pursuing health and regular physical challenges truly can deliver a refreshing new dimension to your relationship.

And now, as promised, here's a variation of the workout we conducted at our gym last night. All it requires is a medicine ball, a pair of light kettlebells, and of course, your

partner! Before you begin, make sure you warm up for at least 10 minutes, getting your entire body warm, loose and limber for the ensuing total-body routine!

Complete the following circuit as many times as possible in 20 minutes:

- 30 alternating Russian kettlebell swings (Partner 1 completes one repetition, immediately followed by Partner 2)
- 30-second side plank, right side
- 30-second side plank, left side
- 30 partner Russian twists with medicine ball (15 each direction)
- 30 alternating goblet squats (Partner 1 completes one repetition, immediately followed by Partner 2)

Exercise Instructions

Alternating Russian Kettlebell Swings

- Hold a kettlebell (start with a light one until you're comfortable with the movement) with both hands in front of you. Stand in a squat position with feet shoulder-width apart, toes angled out slightly.
- Lean over slightly at your waist and bend your knees as if to do a partial squat. Keep your lower back tight and arched, and keep head facing forward. Do not look down.
- Swing the kettlebell up to eye-level with an explosive hip thrust.
- Reverse the motion to return the kettlebell to the starting position between your legs, and immediately begin the next swing.

Side Plank

- Lie on your left side with your knees straight.
- Prop your upper body up on your left elbow and forearm.
- Brace your core by contracting your abs forcefully as if

you were about to be punched in the stomach.

- Raise your hips until your body forms a straight line from your ankles to your shoulders.

Partner Russian Twists

- Sit on the floor beside your partner with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. Hold the medicine ball at your chest.
- Lean back so your torso is at a 45-degree angle to floor, making sure to keep the spine straight and not rounded.
- Raise your core and slowly rotate round to the right as far as you can, bringing the ball to your hip. Pause then reverse this movement, and pass the ball to your partner.
- Complete 15 repetitions, then switch directions to finish the last 15.

Alternating Goblet Squats

- Hold a kettlebell by its horns at your chest. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, torso upright.
- With the kettlebell against your chest, squat down with the goal of having your elbows slide down along the inside of your knees. It's OK to have the elbows push the knees out a bit as you descend. Focus on keeping your back flat.
- Rise out of the squat by driving through your heels.

Stay fit, stay faithful.

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For the original article, visit .

Where Would We Be Without Barnabas' Boldness?

For those of you who have been watching "A.D., The Bible Continues," on Sundays on NBC, you know that they're hitting the homestretch. This Sunday marks episode 11 of 12, and with the conversion of Saul having taken place, the show is well building up to its climax (of course there's no suspense, we all know how it turns out).

At Calvary Assembly in Orlando, our pastor, Ed Garvin, is in the midst of a series of sermons surrounding "A.D." Recently, Pastor Garvin preached on the life of Barnabas, who was very instrumental in the growth of the early church. Barnabas was a man of courage and encouragement, and he took many risks in life, especially in his friendship with Saul, who formerly sought to hunt down and kill Jesus' disciples and early Christians.

Because of his immense persecution of Christians, most believers, including Jesus' disciples, were leery of Saul's intentions to the point of fear. Acts 9:26 says, "And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. But they were all feared him, not believing he was a disciple."

Enter Barnabas (translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus and respected leader of the church, who was one of the first, after Jesus' death, to sell his possessions to help Christians in Jerusalem. Barnabas was obviously a man of conviction, and he believed that Saul's radical transformation

wasn't simply a plot to trap Christians and kill them. Although it's difficult for anyone to change their reputation—especially that quickly—Barnabas believed Saul's experience with Jesus was real.

Because of his good character, Barnabas, a Jewish convert himself, brought Saul to the disciples and became a bridge between them. In other words, Barnabas showed no fear by sticking out his neck for Saul. So, in a way, we can thank him for most of the New Testament, which was written by Saul (who later became the apostle Paul).

Think about it. Without Barnabas' boldness, we can only wonder what might have happened to Paul. In turn, where would we, the 21st-century church, be without Paul's wonderful ministry? I doubt that you would be reading this.

In other words, Barnabas showed no fear in doing what he believed to be right.

So, how do we develop Barnabas boldness? Take a look at these three L's:

1. Listening. While the disciples did not want any part of Saul at first, Barnabas at least was willing to listen to what Saul had to say. He took a risk by listening to Saul and not being afraid of Saul's checkered past. We, today's church, must do the same with anyone that has undergone radical transformation and is seeking a life of serving Jesus. Let us not be quick to judge, but to listen to their testimony and their cry for help.

2. Learning. We must learn to understand that God is taking care of us and will never leave us. Remember what He said in Joshua 1:5—"No man will be able to stand against you all the

days of your life. As I was with Moses, I will be with you. I will not abandon you. I will not leave you.” He reiterated that in Hebrews 13:5, “... For He has said: ‘I never leave you, nor forsake you.’”

3. Leaning. We are a culture that is captivated by fear, and it’s easy for us to play the victim. We become paralyzed by fear. If we don’t learn to lean on Jesus and to trust Him, then we become an invalid for the gospel of Christ. Like the Israelites, when we allow fear to dominate our lives, we will choose slavery over uncertainty.

Remember when Pharaoh and the Egyptian soldiers were pursuing Moses and the Israelites? At the Red Sea, they said, “When Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and indeed, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they were extremely terrified, so the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses, ‘Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness” (Ex. 14:10-12).

“There’s never been an army that God could not defeat or an ocean that He cannot part,” Pastor Garvin said in his Sunday sermon.

Think about that the next time you wonder how you are going to pay a bill. Think about that the next time the doctor gives you a bad report. Think about that when you are discouraged and bereft of hope because there’s no medical reason you and your spouse are having difficulty trying to have children.

What if Barnabas had allowed fear to override his faith? How would the narrative of the Bible be different if he allowed

fear to stop him?

We can be just like Barnabas if we only put our complete trust in God and lay our problems at His feet. Barnabas operated in Holy Ghost courage. You can, too.

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

Shawn A. Akers is the online managing editor at Charisma Media. You can read his blog [here](#).

How to Beat Down Pride in Your Marriage and Manhood

Ah, (insert grunt here), it’s good to be a man.

Strong in stature when looking in the mirror.

Dependable to those you often work around.

Ready to respond to those in particular need.

Firm when it comes to a handshake.

Faithful when church is in service.

Hurtful and often unloving to those closest to you.

Ah, (insert second, larger grunt here), it’s real good to be a man.

Pride will commonly make you appear amazing to those rarely around you, yet it will destroy the relationships with those closest to you.

On the other hand, the stronger trait of humility will keep

both general friendships and close relationships on a constant, upward swing.

Let's look to the Scriptures to find out powerful ways to beat pride out of your marriage and manhood:

"A man's pride will bring him low, but honor will uphold the humble in spirit" (Prov. 29:23).

"When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom" (Prov. 11:2).

Pride, Humility and King Belshazzar

Imagine yourself standing in a room and talking about how great you are to another man when suddenly a hand appears on the wall and starts writing something on it. That's strange, but it would be even stranger if the writing was in a language you had never seen before. Now you're stuck in a really odd situation and you can't read what the inscription says, but you somehow know it's meant for you.

Next thing you know, the buddy you were just standing next to reads the crazy writing and it's a brief message that your own personal downfall is coming quickly because of your pride. Not only did he read something you couldn't, but it was a stern warning that your glorious pride is coming to an extreme halt!

The example above might sound like crazy talk, but it's exactly what happened to the king of Babylon in Daniel 5.

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords and drank wine before the thousand. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar commanded that they bring in the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which was in Jerusalem, so that the king, and his officials, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem. And

the king and his officials, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and of silver, of bronze, of iron, of wood, and of stone. Immediately fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. And the king saw the back of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees struck against one another" (Dan. 5: 1-6).

Just like my example above, the king was instantly humbled and brought down from his high position. His long list of prideful actions had finally caught up to him and it was now time to pay the price. From this moment, he searched and searched to find someone that could read the words on the wall. He finally summoned Daniel, who was able to read the tough message from God.

Before Daniel even read the inscription, he reminded Belshazzar of his own father's prideful life and downfall. He went on to say that even though you watched your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, live a life of pride and die with absolutely nothing, you still chose to live like him. Hear it from Daniel:

"O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father a kingdom and majesty and glory and honor. And for the majesty that He gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he slaughtered, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he set up, and whom he would, he put down. **But when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from him.** And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the animals, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven until he knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and that He appoints over it whomever He wills. Yet you, his

son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this; but have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And they have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine in them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know. And the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not glorified. Then the hand was sent from Him, and this inscription was written" (Dan. 5:18-14, emphasis added).

Here is what the inscription said:

"Mene: God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. Tekel: you have been weighed in the balances and are found wanting. Peres: your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (Dan. 5: 26-28).

That night, the king was slain and someone else took over the kingdom.

Pride, Humility and Your Manhood

The story from Daniel might sound extreme, but isn't it exactly what we do in our own path towards manhood and maturity? You get carried away in your own accomplishments and your own quest for glory, that you forget about helping others. You get so focused on your own problems in life that you forget the needs and problems of others. Don't we know better? Weren't we warned?

The struggle to maintain humility over pride in my own life is an everyday battle that I face. I experience it in conversations and accomplishments at work. As much as I want to get the "high five" or the "well done," I must remember to get off my high horse and do those things to my coworkers. I often find myself comfortable in my own life, that I often forget about encouraging those around me such as family and friends.

Choose humility over pride today. Choose to not live like the king. You know better, so do better!

Pride, Humility and Your Marriage

The examples I wrote at the beginning of this article didn't happen by accident. In fact, I wrote them on purpose. I wanted you guys, my brothers, to realize how pride shows up in your relationships. Pride might keep you looking good to those around you, but it will destroy your closest relationships. This is especially true in your marriage.

“Love suffers long and is kind; love envies not; love flaunts not itself and is not puffed up” (1 Cor. 13:4).

Not only have I seen many men fall victim to pride, but I have lived it out myself. I lived out most of my early marriage the opposite of 1 Corinthians 13:4. And just like the king, I could see my marriage falling apart and I knew better; but I just kept on living the lie. I thought giving up my pride would make me less of a man. I thought showing true love to my wife would make me look weak to everyone else. I was wrong, and it took a near divorce conversation before I realized it.

You beat pride out of your marriage and manhood, by submitting your life over to God.

Don't wait till the writing is on the wall. Don't wait for your friends to confront you. Don't wait until your wife suddenly wants to leave you. Take action now!

Mature men take action on the wisdom they've learned immediately!

Your “TAKE ACTION CHALLENGE” is simple: Set aside time to pray each day and start reading a Proverb a day. #doit #manup #takeaction

What is one thing you can do this week to remove pride from your life? Share in the comments below or on social media.

Maturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Maturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

Here Are Some Easy Ways to Recognize Skin Cancer

We spend a lot of time talking about preventing sunburn, and for good reason. A person's risk for melanoma—the deadliest form of skin cancer—doubles if he or she has had five or more sunburns.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the U.S. More than 90 percent of melanoma cancers are due to skin cell damage from ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure. Melanoma is responsible for more than 9,000 skin cancer deaths each year. In 2011, more than 65,000 melanoma cancers were diagnosed. I was one of them.

I noticed a mole on my back always itched when I got out of the shower. So I went to the dermatologist, who took one look at that mole and said, "That's melanoma." Of course, to be certain, he performed a biopsy on that mole, and of course, it tested positive for melanoma.

I was sent to a surgeon, who cut-off the mole (and a huge chunk of skin surrounding it) and was told he THINKS he got it

all. They never promise they got it all. After all, it only takes one microscopic, stray cell to migrate to the lymphatic system, at which point it can travel to any part of the body, such as the abdomen, and grow into a sizeable tumor.

As with all cancers, the survival rate for melanoma largely depends on how soon the melanoma was detected and removed. We should all see a dermatologist once a year for a full body exam. However, most melanomas are detected by the patient at home, not the doctor in the office. Therefore, get familiar with what your body looks like.

Be on the lookout for moles that could be melanoma. Look EVERYWHERE, such as between your toes and between your legs! Get someone to look in areas you can't see, or do some fancy work with your mirrors. As I mentioned, moles that itch, like mine did, should be looked at by your dermatologist, but there are many other things to consider. In a nutshell, they are called ...

The ABC's of Skin Cancer

A=Asymmetry (a word that means NOT symmetrical): If you draw a line through the middle of your mole and the two sides match, that means it's symmetrical, which is good. But if the two halves do not match that means it's asymmetrical, a warning sign for melanoma.

B=Border: You want to be on the lookout for uneven borders, which can be trouble. See a dermatologist if the edges of your mole are notched or scalloped. Non-cancerous moles have smooth, even borders.

C=Color: If your mole is more than one color, it could be melanoma. Benign moles usually are just one color, and that color is usually brown. However, problem moles that should be looked at by a dermatologist have a number of different shades of brown, tan or black. Some melanomas could even be blue or red, even white.

D=Diameter: The size of mole matters. Look for ones that are larger in diameter than a pencil eraser, which is about 1/4 inch, as a warning. Smaller moles tend to be benign.

E=Evolving: Evolving means changing. Know what your moles look like and see your dermatologist if a mole doesn't look the way it used to look. That was something I noticed about the mole on my back that turned out to be melanoma. Not only did it itch, but it also was getting bigger! Be on the look out for all kinds of change, not just size, including changing shape, color, elevation, or any new symptom such as bleeding or crusting.

For the original article, visit .

3 Ways to Love Your Family With Technology

When it comes to relationships, technology has developed a bit of a bad reputation, and some of it is certainly justified. So many parents are living with digitally distracted kids and diminished family time.

But before you completely hop on the bandwagon of banning technology from your home and life, consider how you can use technology to your advantage in your relationships with your spouse, kids and grandkids.

Get started with these three ways to love your family with technology:

1. Skype, Google Hangout or Facetime your college and career kids: One of my favorite ways to reconnect with my grown kids

is to FaceTime with them. Like I mention in my blog “10 Ways to Turn Technology from Foe to Friend,” this gives us the opportunity to talk face-to-face and even lets them say hi to our dogs too!

2. Post old and new pictures of your spouse or kids on Instagram, Facebook or iCloud: Let your family know you’re thinking of them by posting and tagging old pictures. Remind your daughter how sweet she looked with her two front teeth missing or remind your son how he looked in diapers. You can add an LOL on that post! Also, with iCloud Photo Sharing, you can stream your photos between family members. This is a great way to keep in touch and see your little grandkids or nieces and nephews who don’t live in the same town as you do grow up. You can still stay connected through pictures without having to post them to others on Facebook.

3. Start a group text: A great way to ensure that your entire family stays connected is by starting a group text. Update each other with news, fill it with silly selfies, short videos of you doing something funny or photos of something interesting you’re doing. I send Bible verses to my entire family each week in a group text. For more ideas on what to say, check out these “10 Texts to Send to Your Kids or Grandkids in the Next 10 Days.”

What are some other ways we can love our families with technology?

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

Dating Your Wife: How to Have a Summer Romance

Twentieth-century philosopher Bernard Williams once quipped, "If a June night could talk, it would probably boast it invented romance." It is a time for holding hands, sharing an ice cream as it playfully melts in the heat, and building the bonds of love that will hold a pair together when the briskness of winter returns.

It's a good idea for a man to make good use of the opportunities in front of him while they are there, and summer holds so many for a husband wishing to brighten his marriage. Budgets need not be busted, brains need not be stretched too thin ... all it takes is a sincere imagination and a willing heart. Just as the farmer plants his seeds to harvest in the autumn and store for the winter, we should use this time to plant the seeds of love that will have the same effect.

So, in that spirit, we offer a sample of suggestions of how to have a summer romance and create memories that will last a lifetime.

1. Work on intimacy. Romance comes from the heart and the mind. If there is one lesson that I continually have to keep learning after nearly 18 years of marriage, it's that intimacy is the most critical need for long-term happiness together. Talk to her about real things. She craves it from you. But mostly, a man needs to truly listen. It's the greatest gift of intimacy we can present our wives.

2. Appearance matters. Remember dating? When you would take great care to pick out the right shirt, fix your hair the best you could, and do all the other things to make yourself appealing to her? As partners in marriage, we accept each other as is. But if you are working on romance, appearance

matters. We don't need to be the best looking man in the room. We only need our wives to know that they are worth the effort.

3. Sex is NOT the priority. The world tells us that sex is the only successful conclusion to a romantic evening. The average married couple spends a great amount of energy worried about sex; when in reality, it's their spiritual connection that is crying out for attention. Sex in marriage will result naturally when your spiritual connection is finely tuned. Work on that and see what happens.

4. Learn how to have fun again. Life can beat us down, but we can still find joy. Like the little kid who is running around in the pouring rain and doesn't think for one second that it's crazy, that spirit will lead to cherished memories with your wife.

What are some of your ideas for creating a summer romance?

For the original article, visit .

Struggling With Obesity: How to Move From the Dark to the Light

Back when I was overweight, I also struggled with depression frequently. I had my "I am depressed" routine: Dark room, negative thoughts, messy house, ignored bills, neglected self-care.

But when God said to me, "It is not supposed to be this way," I had a choice: Would I believe Him? Did I want God to teach me how it was supposed to be? My answer to both questions was

“Yes!” I chose to believe God’s Word and that is when my whole life changed.

In John 6:63, Jesus says, “It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and are life.”

If you struggle with negative emotions and habits frequently, then you too can “come into the light.” What God has done for me, He can do for you.

Several years ago, I had a vision of how I used to be when I struggled with obesity, depression, and food addiction. I saw myself huddled in a dark corner and God bathed in light just behind me. I sensed He was calling me to Himself, yet voices were whispering to me that it was safer in the darkness. But God’s love was so strong that I felt compelled to follow Him.

God’s love is what drew me to change, not misery nor self condemnation. I decided I wanted a better life than the one I was living. God loves you too but just like me, you are the only one who can make the decision that you want to live differently.

No one else can do it for you.

In my years of coaching people, I have discovered that there are people who are perfectly happy being miserable. They may get attention and sympathy from others because of their misery. Misery gives them something to talk about even.

They have bought into the lie that they cannot change. And part of them does not want to change because misery is all they know. Deep down, they see misery as safe because they know what that feels like and they are afraid of the unknown.

But God did not create us to live in misery. He created us to live in joy, no matter what we experienced in our past or outward circumstances in the present. He has great plans for

us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, to give us hope and a future (see Jer. 29:11)

In fact, He gives us a promise and offers us an exchange for misery in Isaiah 61:3:

“to preserve those who mourn in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.”

Here is the exchange:

- If you are mourning, God gives you Consolation and the Oil of Joy
- If your life is in ashes, God gives you Beauty
- If you have a spirit of heaviness, God gives you the garment of Praise

Are you willing to believe Him and make the exchange? Jesus did not die so that you could live preoccupied with your past, your shortcomings, and in the pursuit of gratifying your flesh. You are called to be a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He may be glorified.

Not only that, but 1 Peter 2:9 reminds you even more of who you really are and what you are called to do: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may declare the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

Did you get that? According to God’s Word, you are:

- A chosen generation (you were created for such a time as this)
- A royal priesthood
- A holy nation

- God's own special people

Because this is your identity through Jesus Christ, then you were called to proclaim His praises because He has called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

But how will you proclaim His praise when you continue to make darkness your friend? You are called to walk in the light as He is in the light.

So how do you do that? There are two guidelines from the scriptures:

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us take off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12).

The first step is to renounce your friendship with darkness. Repent of any wrong thinking that has set up a stronghold in your mind. Repentance starts with an attitude of your heart. It is agreeing with God that you believe His word above your feelings. You will no longer worship at the altar of your feelings. You will instead be diligent each day to meditate on His word and trust that in time, your feelings will have an extreme makeover!

Just as physical food is designed to give you physical strength, so God's Word is designed to give you Spiritual strength. With that Spiritual strength, you will be able to handle whatever the enemy tries to throw at you.

In addition, you spend time with God in prayer. His presence is like your water—you can't live Spiritually without that! Be honest with God and yourself through prayer. In doing so, you expose the works of darkness into the light. There is an old saying that the strength of sin is secrecy.

How well I know! I used to eat “normal” in front of others and binge in secret. To stop that, I needed to protect myself from

those foods that trigger binges and eat foods that helped me feel emotionally stable. In that way, I could live with integrity—acting the same way whether I was with others or alone.

So be transparent about what you are doing, tell yourself the truth, and stop justifying why it is okay that you continue to live in darkness.

Luke 8:17 says, “For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and revealed.” Your challenge today is to live in the light of God’s love and order your thinking according to God’s word.

1 John 1:5 declares: “This then is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.”

Kimberly Taylor is the author of *The Weight Loss Scriptures and many other books*. Once 240 pounds and a size 22, she can testify to God’s goodness and healing power. Visit and receive more free health and weight-loss tips.

For the original article, visit .

‘Rekindling the Power of God in An Age of Compromise’

Let me first say that I am not a theologian nor am I an expert on the Bible. I am simply like you, and I am trying to be everything that God wants me to be.

I can’t solve all of your problems with the wave of my Bible; I can only relate to you how my life is continually changing

because of my willingness to surrender everything to the Lord.

You can't have everything God wants for you until you're at least willing to do that, that much I know.

As the online managing editor at Charisma Media, I literally see between 20 and 30 new books come across my desk each week. From individuals who are hoping to get exposure for their Christian books in our magazine or on our websites to public relations people from publishing houses sending galley copies and emails requesting interviews with their authors, I always get a healthy dose of the latest teachings out there in book form.

And, over the past year or so, I have begun to become a very avid reader. At lunchtime at work, co-workers can attest to seeing me with my nose buried in a book. With as many as I see each week, I always pray to God for discernment. I ask Him, "Lord, please don't let me read anything that will displease you or that will be a waste of my time. Bring me material that will be beneficial in my walk with You and that will help me in my ministry to spread the gospel for You."

In the last eight months, I have read books like A.W. Tozer's *The Pursuit of God*; Mike Bickle's *Growing in Prayer* and *The Pleasures of Loving God*; Jennifer LeClaire's *The Next Great Move of God* (a book I will blog about soon), *Satan's Deadly Trio* and *The Spiritual Warrior's Guide to Defeating Jezebel*; Rabbi Jonathan Cahn's *The Mystery of the Shemitah*; R.T. Kendall's *Holy Fire*; Todd Starnes' *Godless America*; and Perry Stone's *Deciphering End Times Prophetic Codes*, all of which can be found here.

Another book that impacted me greatly was one titled, *Compassion Without Compromise: How the Gospel Frees Us to Love Our Gay Friends Without Losing the Truth*. I wrote a two-part series about that which you can read here and here. I also have read Dr. David Jeremiah's *Agents of the Apocalypse*

and Dr. Ben Carson's *One Nation*.

As with this fast-paced generation and society, we're all trying to keep up with the next big thing, even in the Christian realm. But with all of the new ones that come my way, it's a book that was published five years ago that I recently read that has impacted me the most. And I'm not saying that simply because the author is a friend of mine. The fact that I know him and that he is my friend is simply a blessing.

In the office one day, I ran across a copy of Lee Grady's *The Holy Spirit is Not For Sale*. (I hope Lee forgives me for lifting the title of this particular blog. I borrowed it from the subhead of his book. At least I used quotation marks and I am attributing it now, according to the rules of ethical journalism).

I am a firm believer in divine appointment. Again, keep in mind that I come across many books weekly, but my prayer is for God to prompt me about what to read. To me, this was divine appointment because I have been diligently seeking the Holy Spirit in recent weeks. I am saved and I do speak in tongues, but I'm looking for a fresh indwelling of the Holy Ghost that will envelope me and overwhelm my life. I mean, I'm all in; and I want everything the Holy Spirit has to give me.

One of the first steps, I believe, was to read *The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale*. R.T. Kendall, who wrote the forward for the book, said he could not put it down, and that it is compulsive reading. I second that notion.

Pastor Jack Hayford said of the book, "No more discerning voice speaks with such clarity and compassion as Lee Grady's. Today's church needs not only to hear but to heed the wisdom set forth in this book." As someone who really respects Jack Hayford, I whole-heartedly concur.

As someone who has been "saved" since 1989, I thought I had

spent the past 25-plus years of my life serving the Lord. As it turns out, I have discovered that a great deal of that time has been wasted. It's not that I haven't read the Bible or that I haven't prayed or that I haven't attended and served in church during that period. It's simply that I haven't taken advantage of the gifts that God has for everyone.

As I said before, I do speak in tongues, but I haven't been using my "prayer language," as my blessed mother Florence calls it, to edify myself. I haven't allowed the Holy Spirit to direct me in many parts of my life, and it's because of that I have experienced many disappointments and failures—some with my career and some with my personal life.

One of the most intriguing parts of *The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale* comes in Chapter 12, titled, "How to Have Your Own Personal Pentecost." Inside that chapter is a subsection titled, "What is Your Spiritual Temperature?" When answering that query, there are 10 questions you need to ask yourself. I have, and the answers are in parentheses:

1. Have you broken all ties to your sinful past? **(not yet)**
2. Are you ruthlessly dealing with all known sin in your life? **(yes)**
3. Are you grieved by the blatant sinfulness of the culture around you? **(Yes, adamantly grieved)**
4. Are you pursuing the things of God with more passion than other personal interests? **(Yes, finally)**
5. Are you intimate with God? **(diligently working on it)**
6. Do you harbor unforgiveness? **(unfortunately, yes, and I'm repenting)**
7. Do you need an attitude adjustment? **(everyone does in some ways)**

8. Does your tongue need an examination? **(it's gotten much better with prayer and the Holy Spirit's guidance)**
9. What's happening in your most private areas? **(As many are, I'm battling and God's prevailing)**
10. Do you have compassion for those who don't know Jesus **(I do now more than ever)**

Lee says, "The Holy Spirit is sensitive and he can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19). This means we can do things that cause Him to withdraw His presence and blessing in our lives. To quench the Spirit is to throw cold water on His flames.

He also says, "I believe we quench the Holy Spirit in many ways. One is with doubt and intellectual pride. If we base all our decisions on what we know, we leave no room for the realm of faith. The Spirit speaks to us in spiritual terms that cannot be understood by the natural man. As long as we live in that realm we will never be filled with the Spirit's power."

Amen and amen. I've spent a great deal of my life relying on myself and what I know, and not what the Holy Spirit wants to teach me. Fear can also quench the Spirit. Ask yourself, are you afraid of the supernatural? Do you really believe that the Holy Spirit can give you the power to heal and even raise people from the dead (yet another blog to come)?

"The Holy Spirit's work can seem strange to us. But we must not let fear stop us from embracing His work," Lee says. "We must be people of faith who expect God to do miracles."

I don't know about you, but that's exactly what I want to be. And, I never want the Holy Spirit to want to withdraw from me. That's why I believe we all should be seeking a life of purity and holiness and not a life of selfish gain and decadent living.

While many Christian leaders write with a voice of condemnation, that's not Lee's thing. In *The Holy Spirit is Not For Sale*, he simply reminds us charismatics of why we profess what we do and why we need to be led by the purifying fire of the Holy Ghost on a daily basis.

It's time, as Lee says, to "stop the funny business" and for the church to get return to integrity and discipline. Let's all seek a fresh indwelling of the Holy Spirit and led Him guide us every day in everything we do. Let us, as believers, show the world the character of Jesus. We will stumble along the way, but let the Holy Spirit correct us, repent, and move forward without compromise.

It's time, in other words, to surrender ALL to the Spirit; and by ALL I mean everything we have inside of us.

After all, the Holy Spirit is not for sale. And as I always say, "there is that."

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12 Benefits of Detoxing the Body

As with any lifestyle change, the key to a successful detox lies in dedication and perseverance.

There seems to be an equal amount of warnings and recommendations for detoxing, which can make it confusing for the would-be detox dieter. As long as you use common sense,

adapt the detox diet to your personal goals, and stay dedicated, there can be many benefits to detoxification.

I've outlined some of the benefits you can expect by following a good detox program:

1. Boosts your energy. By flushing the toxins out from your body, detoxification leaves you feeling more energetic and lively. While you detox, you also stop the influx of sugar, caffeine, trans fat and saturated fat and replace them with natural foods, such as fruits and vegetables. You get a natural energy boost, one that comes without a resultant crash.

It's vital to stay well-hydrated while on any detox program. This can also be a source of increased energy if you typically don't get enough water throughout the day.

2. Rids the body of any excess waste. The main purpose of detoxing is to allow your body to get rid of any excess waste it's been storing. Detox programs are aimed at stimulating the body to purge itself, including the liver, kidneys and colons. Most modern diseases are caused by the storing of waste in the body, which is why detoxifying is very important.

For example, cleansing the colon is an important part of the detoxing process because toxins need to exit the body, and a backed up colon can cause them to be reintroduced into the body, rather than exiting as planned. Even after the detox program, it is recommended to continue a diet rich in soluble fibers to keep your body healthy.

3. Helps with weight loss. A criticism of detox diets is that they only help you lose weight in the short term. It helps, instead, if you look at detox programs as a way to establish long-term eating habits, and rid yourself of unhealthy habits. It all depends on what you focus on.

If you only care about the drastic reduction in calories and

rapid weight loss, you are more likely to gain all that weight back as soon as you stop. These short-term results won't last if you don't make it a point to replace bad foods with good, and use your newfound energy to exercise more and be more active overall.

4. Stronger immune system. Detoxifying your body also strengthens your immune system. Your organs are clean, and free to function as they should. Your body is able to absorb nutrients better, including Vitamin C.

Good detox programs have a recommended intake of herbs which help the lymphatic system. This system is an important player in keeping you healthy long term. Many detox programs also focus on light exercises which help to circulate lymph fluid through the body and helps it to drain, strengthening your immune system in the process.

5. Improved skin. Your skin is your largest organ. Since detox programs improve your overall health, it makes sense that your skin benefits the most.

Detox programs recommend going to a sauna to take a sauna to help the body sweat out additional toxins. Many people are pleasantly surprised by clearer, smoother skin at the end of their detox plan. It's also been reported that detoxing can help with acne, although the condition may worsen before it gets better as the toxins are released. You may find that your skin itches or gets patchy before clearing up, but this is part of the process and is a sign that you're on the right track with your program. Patience and dedication to the detox program is what makes all the difference between success and failure.

6. Better breath

Some people witness better natural breath a couple of weeks into their detox program. One reason for bad breath is a backed up colon. During a detox, you are able to clear it out

and get your digestive system functioning well again. As a result, your breath will see a natural improvement over the coming weeks.

7. Promotes healthy changes. A detox may only be 6 weeks or so, but the changes it makes in your lifestyle are long term. A detox program can be your gateway to a healthier life.

If you have addictions to sugar, caffeine, or fried or crunchy foods you can use a detox program to help you kill those cravings. If you cleanse the body and replace those foods with healthier choices, you can retrain yourself and be more likely to stick to your new habits.

8. Clearer thinking. A cleanse not only benefits your body, but it also strengthens the state of your mind. Meditation is a great way to relax your mind and lower your stress levels.

While the detox is purging your body and cleansing it of toxins, don't forget to focus on your mental health at the same time.

Detox followers often say that they lose that sense of fogginess, and are able to think more clearly during a detox than when not on it. It makes sense, since many of the sugar-filled and fat-filled foods that surround us each day will cause us to feel lethargic and can factor heavily in the quality of our thinking.

9. Healthier hair. A lot of herbs, vitamins and minerals you consume during a detox have a direct impact on making your hair healthier. When your hair is healthy, it looks better and is harder to break. This is why it's important to keep your body functioning at its full potential through a regular detoxing strategy.

When your hair is able to grow uninhibited by internal toxins you'll see and feel the difference in your hair. In many instances hair gets shinier, stronger and feels softer to the

touch. In addition, many people on a detox program report that it helped recover their hair lost due to male pattern baldness.

10. Lighter feeling. Unencumbered by sugar and fat that make it lethargic, your body will feel “lighter” as you progress through your detox diet.

There are several reasons why this would be the case, especially if you’ll be doing a colon cleanse as part of the program. When you stop eating foods that weigh you down, and replace them with fresh organic fruits and vegetables, a lighter feeling is bound to occur. Your body naturally replenishes the energy you lose throughout the day with the help of a good, organic diet.

11. Anti-aging benefits. As already mentioned, detoxing has long-term effects, one of which is anti-aging.

One contributing factor to the aging process is the constant barrage of toxins that our bodies have to battle every day. The trans fats, sugar and caffeine we feed our bodies daily stay in our systems for a long time, introducing free radicals and bad toxins in our body. Detoxing not only gives short term benefits, but those following the programs see long term benefits that combat premature aging. However, for this to work it is important to change your lifestyle even after the detox program is finished.

Sticking to a improved diet and getting daily activity are great ways to make sure that you feel good each moment of your life.

12. Improved sense of well-being. A successful detox takes hard work, dedication and a positive attitude. Detoxing can be a great way to introduce a change in your lifestyle for the better. When you detox, you feel good, and when you feel good, good things happen.

Whatever your reason for starting a detox diet, whether it is losing weight or lowering stress, it is important to keep the positive changes long after the detox program is over.

When you set the stage for well-being, you are going to improve all areas of your life. Just this one change can help you build better relationships, be more productive at work or in your hobbies, and simply enjoy life to its full potential.

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For the original article, visit [. To purchase Dr. Colbert's newest book, The Ultimate Sleep Guide: 21 Days to the Best Night of Your Life \(Siloam, Charisma House, 2015\), click here.](#)

The Isaiah 22:22 Prophetic Act That Breaks Down Barriers

Jesus gave us the keys to the kingdom, and whatever we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 16:19). As spiritual warriors, many of us have become experts at binding and loosing.

But there's another key that believers can use to open doors that no one can shut and shut doors that no one can open. The

Word of God reveals this prophetic key in both the Old and New Testaments. It's the key of David.

Some call it the "Isaiah 22:22 key" but you could also call it the Revelation 3:7 key because the prophetic Scripture is mentioned in both books. Isaiah 22:22 reads, "The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder. Then he shall open, and no one shall shut. And he shall shut, and no one shall open."

Of course, the "He" in this verse is Jesus. Jesus has the key and can open and shut as He wills. When Jesus opens the door, no man can shut it and when Jesus shuts the door, no man can open it. Our job as prophetic people is to discern His will and kingdom purpose so we can exercise our authority in His name to open what He wants opened and shut what He wants shut.

Breaking Down Barriers

Again, the key is discerning His will. Jesus has not called us to be reckless with the key of David, nor will the Isaiah 22:22 key work if we try to turn it in a direction opposite His will. But when we hear from the Lord, we can turn that key with confidence and decree and declare that doors will open or close. It's a powerful prophetic act that breaks down barriers.

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Here's a good example of how this works in action: In February, Ken Malone of Forerunner Ministries ministered at Awakening House of Prayer in the Fort Lauderdale area. When he walked into our little prayer room, he told me it was not big enough to accommodate what God wanted to do in the ministry. Of course I agreed, but we didn't have any other open doors at the time.

What I didn't know was that he brought his big silver

Isaiah 22:22 key and was led to unlock new property for the ministry in a prophetic act. At the end of the service, the man of God brought out that key by the unction of the Holy Spirit and decreed and declared property to open up for the ministry. The authority on his words and the anointing in the room was strong.

The next week I approached the building owner about moving us into a larger spot they had in mind for us when we outgrew our current square footage. That's when I discovered something unexpected—not only was the spot unavailable but the owners were planning to relocate us into an even smaller area. My jaw dropped.

Within three weeks, they had downsized us. But also within three weeks, God opened the door to a second facility 10 minutes (rather than 45 minutes) from my home; a larger facility that was more suited to our training center. There's much more to the prophetic swirl, like the 1948 Tyler Street address (1948 was the year Israel was reborn); the fact that the owners are Jewish and their last name is Morningstar (Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star, according to Revelation 22:16) and the building was a gold color just like our logo. I could go on and on with the prophetic breadcrumbs.

A Governing Key of Authority

The Isaiah 22:22 key also carries a governmental authority. Through our intercession and Spirit-inspired prophetic acts, we can impact our society. God wants to bring an awakening to your city, to your state and to your nation. In April, I went to Florida's state capitol building in Tallahassee with Malone and a large group of people to pray over our state along those lines.

Malone brought his big silver Isaiah 22:22 key and many of us gripped it in our hand as we decreed and declared God's will over the state. We opened the door for righteousness and

closed the door to racism. We opened the door to godly government and closed the door to corruption—and more. We believe we were in God's will and we're believing God for transforming revival in the Forerunner State.

"Some of you may be instructed of the Lord, as I have been, to use your Isaiah 22:22 key within the sphere of government, and particularly within Washington, D.C.," says Dutch Sheets, author of intercessory prayer. "Some of you are called to pray for your state capital, your city or even another nation. Others of you may be assigned to use your kingdom keys in the financial realm, for educational institutions or for the entertainment sector. As you seek the Lord, He will reveal these and other assignments to you." Amen.

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