

Scared You May Have Cancer? This Test Can Forewarn You

Researchers from Northwestern and Harvard Universities have identified a new way to predict who will develop cancer years in advance of current diagnostic techniques.

The approach is based on studies that identified specific changes in blood “telomeres”—strands of DNA on the ends of chromosomes that scientists liken to plastic caps on the ends of shoelaces—that increase the odds of cancer development, *Medical News Today* reports.

The study, published in the journal *EBioMedicine*, is the first to show that blood telomeres age faster and then stop aging for a few years in the period leading up to a cancer diagnosis.

“Understanding this pattern of telomere growth may mean it can be a predictive biomarker for cancer,” said lead researcher Lifang Hou, an associate professor of cancer epidemiology and prevention at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Telomeres gradually shorten as we age, which is why scientists consider them to be a marker of biological age. But the new research suggests they may also hold keys to cancer.

For the new study, the researchers measured telomere length several times over a 13-year period in 792 people—135 of whom eventually developed leukemia, and cancers of the prostate, skin and lungs. The telomeres of the cancer patients aged much faster—shortening more rapidly—in the first few years, than the others.

The researchers said the findings could lead to a blood test for cancer that could lead to earlier treatments, when they

can be most effective at containing or eliminating cancer.

“Because we saw a strong relationship in the pattern across a wide variety of cancers, with the right testing these procedures could be used to eventually diagnose a wide variety of cancers,” Hou said.

The study was funded, in part, by the National Institutes of Health.

For the original article, visit .

Oprah Winfrey’s Deceptive Prayer Practices Leading Many Astray

Remember when Oprah Winfrey created a firestorm among believers by suggesting that Jesus is not the only way? Apparently, her drift away from the Way, the Truth and the Life started decades ago when her Baptist pastor referred to God as a jealous God (see Ex. 20:4-5).

“I looked around and thought, ‘Why would God be jealous? What does that even mean?’ And I’m looking at the people in the church, and everybody’s up, shouting,” Winfrey told *O* magazine readers of the experience, which happened when she was in her 20s. “And I started wondering how many of these people—including myself—would be led to do whatever this preacher said. That’s when I started exploring taking God out of the box, out of the pew.”

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I agree that we don't need to do whatever a preacher says or put God in a box, but Oprah took God into the New Age with her Oprah's Lifeclass: the Tour in 2012 in which she partnered with New Age guru Deepak Chopra on a broadcast about "Spiritual Solutions." It was against that backdrop that she claimed she was a Christian, which set off another huge debate about the entertainment and media icon's faith.

"I am not talking about religion. I am a Christian. That is my faith," Winfrey told her Radio City Music Hall audience. "I'm not asking you to be a Christian. If you want to be one I can show you how. But it is not required. I have respect for all faiths. All faiths. But what I'm talking about is not faith or religion. I'm talking about spirituality."

New Age Meditation

This "spirituality" made its way to Stanford University's Memorial Church last week. Oprah led over 1,000 members of Stanford in some sort of New Age meditation exercise.

"Close your eyes for a moment, will you please, and breathe with me," she told them. "And if you will, put your thumb to your middle finger and gather your other fingers around, and let's feel the vibration and pulse of your personal energy as you take three deep breaths with me."

Oprah went on to share with them a secret to prayer, or at least her version of prayer.

"Open your heart and quietly to yourself say the only prayer that's ever needed: Thank you, thank you, thank you," she said. "You're still here. You get another chance *this day* to do better and be better, another chance to become *more* of who you were created and what you're created to fulfill. Thank you. Amen."

In fact, Winfrey said she started a gratitude journal in the 1980s and suggested her listeners take up the practice.

“Gratitude journaling has become a spiritual practice that leads to a more enhanced and meaningful life, and you can start it today,” she said. “I guarantee if you did it for a week you would see a difference, because every day—and I’ll do it when I go home—I write down five things that I am grateful for, or that brought me joy or opened my heart space.”

A New Age Take on Prayer

I’m all for gratitude journals. I’m all for prayers of thanksgiving. But this New Age take on prayer is simply not biblical. “Thank you, thank you, thank you” is not the only prayer that’s ever needed. This is so far from the truth that I have to call it what it is: deception. The Bible commands us to pray for very specific things beyond thanks.

Consider 1 Timothy 2:1-4: “Therefore I exhort first of all that you make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

What about Psalm 122:6, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

Oh, and let’s not forget the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13: “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

I appreciate the encouragement that Oprah has given many over the years, but her alignment with New Agers like Chopra, the graphic depiction of sexual perversion on her television network, and her open door for heretics like Rob Bell to trash the Bible on her program trouble me. These are not the moves

of a woman who knows how to pray and tap into the wisdom of God.

My Prayer for Oprah

Oprah claims to be a Christian and I will not judge her salvation, but clearly she's wielding her great influence in a way that's conflicting with Christian values and biblical teachings. The Bible tells us to give thanks when we pray, but "thank you, thank you, thank you" is not "the only prayer that's ever needed."

My prayer for Oprah comes out of Ephesians 1:17-21: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give Oprah the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of her understanding may be enlightened, that she may know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward those who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He performed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." Amen.

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How to Deal With Work-Family Dilemmas

Most of you know I am CEO of the National Center for Fathering as well as a husband, father and grandfather. Those are not my only roles in life, but they are the main ones. And sometimes those roles don't get along; quite often they create difficult dilemmas.

I'm sure many of you experience it too. As dads, we feel an ongoing tension just about every day. My family is a huge part of my life; investing in my wife and my children and grandchildren is a top priority, no question.

At the same time, I love my job! I'm busy doing things that matter. My job gives me a sense of purpose.

And I'm very aware that in many ways *I chose* these roles and this life. For the most part, I wouldn't change it.

But often there's some tension. That purpose and drive that I feel at work isn't easy to turn off every day when I get home. There are always more things I could be doing at the office that could make a difference in some way. Those things are good, and they often *seem* more urgent than many other things in life.

Not long ago I came face-to-face with this dilemma in some powerful ways.

My daughter and her children, who live in another state, were visiting and staying at our house. Also, it was a very busy time at the office. At home, there were all kinds of shenanigans going on with the grandkids: running around the

house, playing games, eating meals—all that great stuff I get to experience and enjoy as a granddad.

One of those mornings, none of the grandkids were up yet when I was about to walk out the door to work. I stood there thinking about the possibilities—the things scheduled for that morning at work, and the grandkids that would soon be waking up and bouncing down the stairs. I just had to call the office and let them know I'd be a few minutes late.

Then one evening it all became clear. People were calling and texting about different work things, and I looked over into the next room and saw the rest of my family “doing life” without me. I was convicted!

Those grandchildren needed my attention; I thought of them like lumps of clay, being molded into adults. They have great parents, but I also have a role to play.

So that evening, I silenced my phone and put it in the other room. I decided that those moments at home are more important than the work demands, which really never go away .

Dad, I don't know what your work and home schedules are like. I suppose all our situations are different in some ways; some workplaces don't allow a lot of flexibility. So I can't make suggestions that work for everyone.

But I would urge you to really consider how *present* you are when you're home from work ... or maybe the issue is that you *aren't* home very much because of work. We all need to provide for our families, but I hope you're not missing those priceless family times that can happen any evening or morning.

Be sensitive to what things are getting your time and attention, and choose to give your best to your family .

Dad, how do you navigate day-to-day work-family dilemmas and

make sure your family gets your very best?

Action Points

- Create regular rituals to connect with your family members, whether it's phone calls from the office, special "daddy" time when you walk in the door, or other weekly events that keep you in touch.
- Try viewing the work/family tension as a *positive*. It's good to regularly re-evaluate your values and priorities. We need to always be improving as employees *and* as fathers.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering (NCF), as well as a husband, father, and grandfather. He is author of Championship Fathering and general editor of The 21-Day Dad's Challenge. See more about Carey here.

25 Habits That Help You Get a Good Night's Sleep

As you continue to develop good health habits to improve the quality of your sleep, consider adopting good sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene simply refers to the practices that promote continuous and effective sleep.

Another way to look at it is this: Sleep hygiene is simply establishing healthy sleep habits. There are 25 good sleep hygiene habits that will enable most people to fall asleep and stay asleep.

1. The most important sleep hygiene tip is to establish a regular bedtime as well as a regular time of waking up in the morning. Make this a habit, and stick to the schedule on

weekends and even during vacations. Do not be haphazard about it, but based on your work schedule, set aside eight hours for sleep and a time to be in bed. For myself, I choose to be in bed between 10:00 and 10:30 p.m.

2. Use your bed only for sleep and sexual relations. Do not use your bed for reading, watching TV, snacking, working or worrying.

3. Avoid naps after 3:00 p.m. When they are taken earlier in the day, make sure they are not longer than 20 to 30 minutes.

4. Exercise before dinner. Exercising too close to bedtime disrupts sleep.

5. Avoid caffeine in the late afternoon and evening.

6. Avoid excessive fluids in the late evening and especially before bedtime.

7. Eat normal portion sizes of a well-balanced meal at dinnertime approximately three to four hours before bedtime as well as a light bedtime snack. Do not go to bed hungry, and do not eat a large meal prior to bedtime.

8. Take a warm bath one to two hours before bedtime, and consider adding lavender oil if desired in order to help you relax.

9. Keep the bedroom cool and well ventilated.

10. Purchase a comfortable mattress, pillow and linens. (Check out a 3-inch Tempur-Pedic pad to put on top of your mattress.) Remember, you spend roughly one-third of your life in bed; therefore, your bed should be your most important piece of furniture.

11. Thirty minutes before going to bed, start to wind down by listening to soothing music, reading the Bible or another good book, having a massage or being intimate with your spouse.

12. Put dimmer switches on your lights, and dim them a few hours prior to bedtime.
13. After you lie down to go to sleep, if you are not asleep in 20 minutes, simply get up, go into another room, and read and relax in dim light until you feel sleepy. Then return to bed.
14. If your spouse awakens you with snoring or unusual movements, simply move to the guest bedroom.
15. Try to wake up at the same time each day.
16. Try exchanging foot, neck and shoulder, back or scalp massages with your spouse, and purchase an inexpensive handheld massager from Brookstone.
17. Relax your mind and body before bedtime by gentle stretching, relaxation exercises or using an aromatherapy candle or oil.
18. Clean clutter out of the bedroom, and remove computers, fax machines, paperwork and anything that reminds you of work.
19. Make sure your bedroom is completely dark. Remove all nightlights and cover your alarm clock and phone light with a hand towel. Put black electrical tape or sticky notepads over tiny lights on your alarm system, TV, DVD, satellite, stereo or any other lights that are visible. Consider purchasing blackout curtains.
20. Block out noise by using earplugs, doublepaning your windows, or using heavy drapes. I personally use a sound generator I purchased from Brookstone that plays white noise. Or you can simply use a fan.
21. Try a lullaby CD or a CD that has sounds of nature.
22. Keep pets out of your bedroom. Pets may snore, pounce on you, growl, howl, bark or whine. They can also trigger

allergies in many patients.

23. Avoid watching heart-pounding movies, ball games or late-night news. Instead watch something funny or lighthearted before bedtime, but it's best not to watch TV in the bedroom.

24. When lying in bed, you and your spouse may try telling or reading funny jokes to one another. Couples who laugh together and pray together generally stay together.

25. Meditate on Scripture, and do not let your mind worry or wander. I meditate on the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. I also meditate on Psalm 91, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and Ephesians 6:10-18. You need to memorize these Scriptures and meditate on them over and over.

This article was excerpted from The Ultimate Sleep Guide: 21 Days to the Best Night of Your Life (Siloam, Charisma House, 2015), by Don Colbert, M.D. The book can be purchased here.

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For Better or Worse: 5 Ways to Persevere in Your Marriage

Most couples promise to love their spouses for better or

worse. You don't even have to be married to be familiar with probably the most well-known part of the standard wedding vows. I have to admit I can't remember much of the other parts of our wedding vows. But, for some reason that "for better or worse" sticks in my head.

Although most couples used that phrase in their wedding vows, I'm not sure they really knew what they were saying. My wife and I have definitely experienced both, and I'm happy to say that we've made it through. It hasn't been easy by any means, and I'm sure there have been couples that have called it quits at the slightest experience of "worse." It's probably easier to do than to fight through or to persevere.

Persevering is how I'd describe it for us during those times. My wife and I have gone through financial despair, homelessness, communication issues and even in-law conflicts. But that is the commitment we made, and we would not let anything tear us apart.

Here are five ways to persevere and to honor your promise to love for better or worse:

1. Remember your promise. Sometimes just remembering what you said you were going to do is enough to help you through. Even if it's not enough by itself, it is a great starting point.

2. Remember the moments. In the interview my wife and I did with Mark and Susan Merrill from Family First, the parent organization of All Pro Dad, iMOM and the Family Minute with Mark Merrill, Susan mentioned the counsel she got to look around at the scene on their wedding day. Remembering moments like this can help you push through.

3. Have help. One of the biggest things that helped us through the hard times we faced was the close friendships we had with other couples as well as their counsel. Without them being there for us and with us, we may not be where we are today—together.

4. Don't accept anything less than a fulfilling marriage.

Sometimes it just takes buckling down and not accepting anything less than the best. It's not easy, but closing off other options will force you to work for it.

5. Depend on God. All of the above is great. But without prayer and faith in the promises we found in God's Word, our marriage would be nowhere or nothing like it is today. At the end of the day, that is the best thing we have is our commitment to God and to one another.

You may be faced with tough times, but don't give up. This is a season and things won't be like this forever. Keep that in mind and don't lose hope. My wife and I have persevered as well as other couples. And you can do the same too.

Sound Off!

What are you willing to do to persevere through the challenges you are facing in your marriage?

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Hint: For Lower Blood Pressure, Eat More of These

If you want to protect your teens from high blood pressure as adults, ease off on salt restrictions and make sure they're getting enough potassium in their diets.

A study at Boston University found that salt had no long-term effect on blood pressure. Researchers followed the dietary habits of 2,185 girls ages 9 to 10 for 10 years, measuring their intake of sodium and potassium.

The study, which was published in *JAMA Pediatrics*, found no evidence that higher intakes of salt had a negative effect on adolescent blood pressure. But girls who had high levels of potassium had lower blood pressure throughout adolescence than girls who were deficient in the mineral.

“It may be that potassium is more of a determinant of blood pressure than sodium is,” lead author Lynn L. Moore told the *New York Times*. “The kids who consumed the most potassium had much lower blood pressures by the end of adolescence. What we need to focus on is increasing potassium intake rather than focusing on restricting sodium intake.”

The Boston University study wasn't the first to connect potassium with lower blood pressure. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* examined the relationship of salt intake and potassium. It found that potassium could counter the negative impact of salt on blood pressure, and that diets rich in potassium may reduce the risk of death and cardiovascular disease.

Experts suggest an intake of 4,700 milligrams of potassium daily. Citrus fruits, bananas, potatoes, kale, and fish are rich sources of potassium.

For the original article, visit .

Is Prophetic Evangelism the Answer?

When Kevin Dedmon walked into a New Mexico pizza shop with two 60-year-old women and a young man, the hostess told the visitors to sit anywhere they liked.

"We're not here for pizza," replied the pastor from Northern California's Bethel Church. "We're on a treasure hunt."

After they showed her clues the Holy Spirit had revealed prior to the group's visit, the woman said, "I'm not a treasure. I'm an atheist." Then she asked them to leave. As they turned to go, Dedmon sensed the Spirit leading him to tell the woman, "God wants you to know you're a good mom."

Immediately, she erupted with cries so loud the shop's owner rushed out from the back to halt what he thought was a robbery in progress. "No," the woman told him, "they're here to help me."

Then she related how her 16-year-old daughter had tried to commit suicide four days earlier. That morning, the hostess awakened awash with guilt, thinking her poor parenting skills were to blame.

Not only did the hostess accept Christ and get filled with the Spirit, so did the owner. Amazing? Yes, but for Dedmon and others he has trained, such continuing experiences illustrate the effectiveness of prophetic evangelism—an innovative method of reaching unbelievers through prophetic gifts.

Today, Christian evangelists and laypersons alike are using words of wisdom, gifts of healing and prophecy to open others' hearts and minds to the claims of Christ. These modern-day soul winners say these supernatural insights mean the best days of evangelism are still ahead.

"This is the antithesis of the normal preacher with a bullhorn condemning (crowds): 'You rotten sinners,' " says Dedmon, whose book, *Treasure Hunt*, has become a classic in this field. "I think it's time the world gets a true representation of Jesus. He didn't go around condemning sinners and tax collectors, just religious leaders. He became a doctor, a friend and a counselor to people, and they wanted to follow Him."

“It’s just an expression of how we do life,” says Bethel Pastor Bill Johnson, whom Dedmon credits with opening him to the “out-of-the-box” thinking that led to *Treasure Hunt*. “All prophetic evangelism is connecting to God’s heart for people. Jesus came to reveal the Father, not the taskmaster or the caretaker of an orphanage. We look to find the gold in people, for what God has deposited in them. That’s their true identity.”

Prophetic evangelism is definitely on an upward trend, comments Hal Linhardt, director of the Forerunner Evangelism department at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Missouri. Ironically, despite its reputation as a cutting-edge ministry for more than 15 years, IHOPKC’s evangelistic outreach has only blossomed during the past five.

While Dedmon’s book helped light a spark, Linhardt identifies a crucial development as his team attended Christ for all Nations Founder Reinhard Bonnke’s first school of evangelism in Orlando, Florida, in June 2012.

“He laid hands on everyone,” Linhardt says. “We came back with a fresh anointing and a zeal to go out and do things, whether prophesying to people, healing or calling people out into their destiny. I think it’s part of the restoration of all things. With the establishment of the 24-7 prayer movement, I think God is answering prayers. He saves the best wine for last.”

This emphasis is emerging through various leaders. Figures like former drug addict Todd White (founder of Power & Love Ministries), Steven Uggen of Trinity Works in Minneapolis, and prophetic teacher Randy Clark. A number of powerful evangelists are part of Clark’s ministry, such as Will Hart, featured in filmmaker Darren Wilson’s latest movie, *Holy Ghost*.

This movement is widespread too.

Dallas-area teacher Jean Krisle Blasi, who has taught at Bethel and numerous other venues, knows of churches in California, Michigan and Hawaii that are especially active, as well as one in Germany.

Blasi says that while every believer has the gift of prophecy in them, many don't recognize it. Insisting that everyone with Jesus inside has a prophetic gift, she trains thousands of people annually on how to listen so it can emerge.

"It's a new paradigm," Blasi says. "It comes out of the presence and power of God. You've got to have the presence of God; He has to do the work. It's not you. When I open my mouth because I believe God is going to be there, God comes."

Reaching the Lost

This expanding form of outreach promises to multiply the often-limited impact of traditional evangelism.

A 2013 survey by The Barna Group found that 73 percent of born-again Christians say they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, but only 52 percent had actually done so during the previous year.

Fear and uncertainty over how to present the gospel to unbelievers are often cited as prime drawbacks. But Dedmon thinks the very nature of street witnessing that reaches drug addicts and the homeless proves ineffective with doctors, lawyers, soccer moms or delivery truck drivers.

Formerly a pastor in Huntington Beach, California, Dedmon saw this firsthand going to the beach every Friday night for 10 years. He says prophetic evangelism not only meets needs, it unlocks others' destinies.

Healing is an integral part of this tool. Two years ago in a shopping mall in Switzerland, Dedmon observed a Muslim family, denoted by the women clad in burkas. He walked up and asked

who had back pain, which brought an affirmative response from an elderly woman.

Assuring her he could practice “presence therapy,” Dedmon placed his hand on her back and prayed. About 15 seconds later, she gyrated with joy before placing his hand on her neck and asking him to pray for her neck and shoulders.

Next, he prayed for the woman’s 12-year-old granddaughter, who hadn’t been able to bend over normally. The girl responded by jumping in the air, exclaiming, “Grandma, I’m healed!” Before Dedmon left, everyone had said a prayer indicating their decision to follow Christ.

Johnson says Bethel has observed more than 1,000 healings in the midst of this wave, such as one woman who had steel rods in her spine that vanished, people coming out of wheelchairs, and cancer cures.

“We don’t do what we do to get attention,” the pastor says of skeptics who question such reports. “If the person who was deaf in his right ear can hear now, he knows.”

IHOPKC has reported similar activity. Linhardt says his teams have seen around 1,000 healings the past year during weekly visits to Kansas City’s jails, nursing homes, festivals, and other places. About 90 percent occur outside of church environments.

“We go anywhere people are,” Linhardt says. “Sometimes we’re led to a particular person. It’s all about talking to people and the Holy Spirit letting us know something about them.”

They happen outside the state too. Last year Ehi Taranov traveled to New Orleans with an IHOPKC evangelism team. There he approached a young man who had just exited a bar and asked if he had pain in his lower back.

“Actually I do,” the man responded. “I just drank beer and that’s why, because I’m in excruciating pain and I don’t like

the pills they gave me.” Taranov asked if he could put his hand on the man’s vertebrae. When he agreed, Taranov simply prayed, “In Jesus’ name, be healed.” The man responded by bending over and touching his toes. Then he screamed, exclaiming he hadn’t been able to do that for five years. He asked how Taranov had been able to do that. “Jesus,” Ehi replied. “Would you like to know more?” “Yes,” the man said, and said a prayer dedicating his life to Christ.

Treasure Hunting

Dedmon first thought of treasure hunting in 2003. Despite Bethel’s burgeoning reputation as a spiritual mecca—its School of Supernatural Ministry has 2,100 students—back then few members were going on visitations. Even the leader didn’t want to go; when he confessed that, God told him, “So change it.”

That led to the concept of developing a treasure map with certain clues from the Spirit about people who represent treasures. Namely, those whom God has His eye on because He knows who is spiritually receptive. One suggested approach: “Excuse me, ma’am. We’re on a treasure hunt and we think you are our treasure. See, we have red shirt on our list and you have a red shirt on. We are out to bless people in the community, and we want to see if you need healing anywhere in your body.”

“I’ve made witnessing and evangelism fun,” Dedmon says. “The evangelist’s job is to equip, activate and empower people to do witnessing. We’re all supposed to witness. I don’t even like the term, ‘prophetic evangelism,’ because it makes it seem like the evangelist is supposed to be doing the witnessing.”

While their methods aren’t identical, the Kansas City evangelists see similar results. When Josh MacDonald flew to a conference Minneapolis in the spring of 2014, he and another team member noticed a blonde teen a few rows away because of

her repeated glances at them during their flight.

As the married 25-year-old MacDonald wondered if she was flirting, the Spirit whispered, "She's an evangelist."

Unable to find her after they landed, MacDonald pulled out his phone and recorded a video declaring the girl was an evangelist. He promised to show her the video later that weekend.

As the weekend passed, MacDonald wondered if he had heard right. That is, until he saw her with her parents as they arrived at the airport for their return flight.

Walking up, MacDonald introduced himself and showed them the video he recorded two days earlier. After all three burst into tears, MacDonald encouraged her to pursue God's calling.

"I just accepted Jesus into my life a month ago," said the girl, who was staying at a Kansas City boarding school after earlier rebellions left her parents unable to cope.

This meeting led to a relationship between the boarding school and IHOPKC, and financial support for MacDonald's ministry (Messenger's BootCamp) from the parents. It also prompted a visit to the IHOPKC campus by the girl and her mother in early January of 2015. With her daughter in constant pain because of a rare disease that led to her shoulders constantly popping out of place, the mother had driven to Kansas City to comfort her.

The morning MacDonald prayed for her, he recalls the Spirit falling over the room and both of the girl's shoulder blades snapping into place. "She lifts her arms straight up in the air and her mother is crying and saying, 'I can't believe it,' " MacDonald says.

Facing Challenges

As exciting as such testimonies are, believers must steel

themselves for rejection like the kind IHOPKC's assistant evangelist department director, Laurie Ditto, encountered several years ago.

She took a team of international students on door-to-door evangelism, something they would never do at home. At one house, an elderly African-American answered. As a Hispanic girl with heavily-accented English explained why they were there, Ditto heard the Spirit say, "He's going to die in three days."

Although the man replied that he wasn't interested, Ditto followed by describing the terrible things that had happened during his life, including rejection by his children. Telling him she had come because of his sickness, Ditto asked if he had cancer. He asked how she knew, but when she said, "Jesus," he rejected her invitation to follow Him.

"So I started all over again and God gave him more wonderful facts about this man," Ditto recalls. "He eventually said, 'I believe you believe what you're telling me, but I refuse to believe there's a God. Now please leave.' "

"I wanted to quit my job," says Ditto, the author of *Go Tell Others About Me*. "I told Hal, 'I quit' and he said, 'You don't need to quit. You need a vacation.' "

Soon after, Ditto and her husband received two plane tickets to Florida, where a family provided them a place to stay, a car, and spending money. One day as she sat by the pool and asked God what to do, He replied she could quit but there wouldn't be anyone to take her place—a divine comment on the lack of workers in the spiritual harvest.

Ditto has since seen the wisdom of remaining. At last December's One Thing conference, she met a young teen and his grandparents. As she talked to them, she sensed the young man was quite troubled.

Using her prophetic gift, she described his nature and his favorite subject in school. That led to a discussion where she learned that the youth had tried to commit suicide and was considering another attempt. She later told the grandparents that the boy didn't trust them because of some things that had happened in the past, which prompted a teary admission from the grandmother that she had spoken uncaring words.

"This grandfather was a 6-foot-6, 250-pound man and he told this teen, 'I affirm you,'" Ditto says. "When I saw them the next day, everything about this boy had changed. Yes, he got saved, but this prophetic gift is able to unlock pieces of people's heart."

Besides potential rejection, Christians must keep a balanced perspective about what lies ahead. Linhardt warns that the last days will include great darkness, "technological tyranny," and God's judgment.

Before the latter occurs, he thinks God's mercy will be evident as prophetic evangelism leads to mass conversions.

"In judgment God is going to remember mercy, which means souls, which means He needs evangelists," Linhardt says. "He's literally giving the call of the evangelist to the church. That's prophetic. Judgment is coming and He needs workers."

As part of this divine activity, the IHOPKC leader predicts there will be round-the-clock evangelism, similar to the 24-7 prayer movement that has spread across the globe since 1999.

He believes that helping fuel this development will be formation of countless grassroots evangelists' groups, which Linhardt says will provide the accountability and mutual encouragement they often can't find in churches.

Johnson agrees that God is at work in powerful ways. Instead of fretting over the huge social problems in our midst, he advises Christians to take their cue from Christ. When John

the Baptist asked if He was “the One,” Jesus told him to focus on results: the lame walking, the blinding see, the deaf hearing and the gospel proclaimed (Matt. 11:5).

“There are things happening now that were dreams a decade ago,” Johnson says. “Miracles are common. I can’t give the details, but we’re frequently brought to offices of national political leaders and top business leaders. There’s a level of (spiritual) hunger at the higher echelons of society I have never seen.”

Lindhardt gets this too. “I think we’re going to see some of the most exciting evangelism ever take place in the very near future,” Lindhardt says.

Ken Walker is a freelance writer, co-author, and book editor from Huntington, West Virginia, as well as a longtime contributor to Charisma.

Evangelist Tom Scarrella shares ideas on how to go out and impact the harvest through the Spirit at .

What Unique Gifts or Traits Did God Give Your Mother?

After Mother went home to be with the Lord, the family held an estate sale of her possessions that had been sitting in boxes for years.

As I rummaged through the boxes of elegant china, laces and

linens, one box in particular caught my eye. This one smelled musty, and a piece of straw was poking through the top. I pried it open with scissors and began to sneeze.

What was this? I came face-to-face with an ugly rock. Its moss on top made it look like a man's head.

Aha! I remembered! Years before Mother had been a special education teacher. Her passion was sharing the beautiful creations from her nature walks with her students. That meant her bedroom was filled with rocks, plants and seashells. Torn between keeping the old rock, and tossing it, I prayed, "Lord, what would be the best thing to do here?"

Before I waited for an answer, I had an idea. The hairy rock was to stay and grace the estate sale table, alongside the fine china. This was turning out to not be your usual estate sale, but a display of one mother who was definitely outside the box!

Next I found a plate. Not the typical plate offered at an estate sale, but a paper plate, handcrafted into a clock with Popsicle-stick hands. On the back was a message scrawled by a child: "To Mrs. Stickum, with love from Billy."

It didn't matter to Mother that her last name was *really* Stithem or that the back of the plate was smudged with pizza sauce from Billy's lunch. Mother had considered this a treasure from one of her special education students, so it had to stay. Onto the table it went right next to the fine china.

If plates could talk, I would have heard a sigh from the fine china: "What's *he* doing here? He's a smudgy thing with 51-year-old pizza stains! We're so fine, and we're prettier!" I cut the imaginary scene of the battle of the plates and resumed emptying the musty box.

Suddenly, I screamed and jumped back. *Had worms crept in?* Heaven knows what had crawled into this old box from sitting

in the basement for half a century.

Then a memory came to mind. One Sunday, I had called Mother and was greeted with, "Hey honey, I'm up to my elbows in worms and dirt. I got a Mother's Day gift of a worm Jell-o mold and chocolate dirt cookie kit! Can't wait to try this out on the neighborhood kids! Hee-hee-hee!" *This was so Mother-saving* Jell-o molds to make "worms" with chocolate dirt for cookies. No question about it—Mother was outside the box!

I was reminded of a Scripture describing us as being "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14, NKJV). This described my mother—so wonderfully and uniquely made by God.

If you are a mom, just know that you are unique and special in your role. As for your mother or aunt or grandma—remind them that their role is *not* by accident, but divinely appointed by God—to nurture uniquely as God so uniquely designed them.

Prayer Power for the Week of May 4, 2015

This week before Mother's Day, thank God for your own mother and the role He had her play in your life. Remember Moms everywhere and especially pray for single moms and those separated from their children because of addictions, divorce or incarceration. Pray that God will provide a godly mother's influence through aunts, grandmothers and friends for these children. Pray for the protection of all our children in their homes, schools, churches and communities. Pray for those who suffered losses through recent accidents, earthquakes, and criminal violence. Continue to pray that the church would lead the way in repentance and revival so that God would heal our land. Remember Israel and pray as the Lord leads (; 2 Chron. 7:14).

7 Lies the Enemy Tries to Sell You About Marriage

In “7 Truths about Marriage,” I reflected on some key things my wife, Susan, and I have learned about marriage. As I’ve read comments on my marriage posts, I’ve come to realize that there are a lot of lies out there about marriage that people are not only believing, but also are embracing.

Here are 7 lies about marriage:

Lie No. 1: Marriage is a contract. If we accept this lie, we think that marriage is a mere transaction. That it’s an “I’ll do this, only if you do that” kind of relationship. And, “If you don’t do that, I’m terminating the contract.”

I have shared previously that “Marriage was never meant to be a contract to be broken, but a covenant to be cherished. [There] is the clear difference between a covenant and a contract ... In a nutshell, a contract is all about what you get. A covenant is all about what you give.”

Lie No. 2: Marriage is an outdated institution. If we accept this lie, we are saying that this God-ordained institution established since the beginning of mankind and intended to last while mankind is on this earth can be set aside and disregarded by the whim of man. The institution of marriage may be under attack, but it is still unchanging.

Lie No. 3: Marriage is a 50-50 partnership. If we accept this lie, we excuse ourselves from putting our 100 percent into the relationship. We will constantly be comparing our efforts against our spouses and questioning who does more in the relationship. In such a scenario, husbands and wives may even find themselves keeping a marital scorecard of who spends more, disciplines more, does the dishes more, cleans more or works more. Marriage is a 100 percent-100 percent, give it all

you've got relationship.

Lie No. 4: Marriage will end the battle with lust. If we accept this lie, we set ourselves up for disappointment and failure. Most struggles we bring into a marriage are not solved by marriage, but rather in marriage.

Lie No. 5: Marriage will fix my problems and make me happy. If we accept this lie, we put unrealistic pressure on our spouse to fulfill us and take care of all our problems. Marriage should bring happiness and satisfaction. Spouses can help one another to work through issues, but our spouse can never be the be-all and end-all of our lives. Only God can.

Lie No. 6: Marriage is about what I can get from my spouse. If we accept this lie, we will crush our spouse with our selfishness. When our marriage is focused on giving, instead of getting, it's more rewarding and enriching. Love is all about giving.

Lie No. 7: Marriage shouldn't be hard work. If we accept this lie, we misunderstand the true nature of man and marriage. Because we humans are inherently selfish, husbands and wives must constantly work against that nature and seek to give to rather than to get from their spouse.

Donald Trump once said about working on a marriage: "Well if you have to work at it then maybe it's not worth having. I have to work at everything else in my life. I have to work at my work. I just think a marriage should be easy, not hard."

Actually, we do have to work at marriage, and it is worth having. Like most other things in life, when we really work on our marriage, it only gets better and better.

What are other lies about marriage? Have you ever believed any of the above lies?

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the

original article, visit .

Are Probiotics a Smart Choice?

One of the most important things anyone can do to improve their health is take a probiotic. Probiotics help restore the proper balance in one of the most crucial parts of our body ... many health experts say THE most crucial part of the body: the gut.

Only recently have doctors discovered that a staggering 85 percent of our health problems originate in our gut, also known as intestines. Likewise, 70 percent of our immune system is in our intestines. Shocking!

This is actually a good news/bad news scenario in that the good news is establishing good gut health is relatively easy and cheap. The bad news is that those of us who do nothing are at great risk of having some type of health problem originating from the gut.

Here's the bottom line: we have literally trillions of bacteria in our gut. Many, many of them are essential to our overall good health. These are called "good" bacteria. The problem is, our American lifestyle has killed many of these good bacteria. When that happens, all kinds of problems can erupt. The quick fix is to put back those good bacteria.

The easiest way to do that is with a pill. A probiotic. There are lots of them on the market, such as the supplement called Acidophilus. Then there private brands from which to choose.

There are also foods that add good bacteria back into our gut, such as yogurt. The problem with yogurt is that most brands are loaded with sugar, often as much as one-and-a-half ice cream cones! So if you choose yogurt, choose the plain kind, then if you want to add sweetness, throw in some berries.

Fermented foods are great probiotics. Topping the list is the Korean favorite Kimchi, which is available at most grocery stores. There are lots of ways to prepare it, such as adding it to scrambled eggs in the morning or to soups. Some people eat it right out of the jar.

As for me, I find it just safer and easier to take a probiotic supplement so I don't have to constantly keep track of whether I've eaten probiotic foods, and whether I've had enough of them. Plus, lots of us steer clear of dairy, so that means no yogurt.

You may be wondering how we got into this mess in the first place. How is it that so many of our good, life-sustaining bacteria are being wiped-out? There are several culprits.

The main one is our SAD diet. Remember, SAD stands for Standard American Diet. In other words, processed foods kill our good bacteria ... things like soda. Honestly, that stuff is poison.

Another huge good bacteria killer is antibiotics. Any time you take an antibiotic you should be aware that it is not only killing the bad bacteria for which it is intended, but it is also killing the good bacteria. These days wise doctors who prescribe antibiotics are telling their patients to also take a probiotic, such as Acidophilus for at least the entire run of the antibiotic, often longer.

A third major cause of the destruction of our good bacteria is all the antibacterial products we use, such as antibacterial soaps. Similar to antibiotics, these soaps kill not only the bad bacteria, but also the good ones. Many doctors will tell

you the non-antibacterial ones are better because they still clean your hands sufficiently, while at the same time leaving your good bacteria intact.

So if you are wondering why you don't feel as good as you should, the answer probably originates in your gut. By taking a probiotic, over time, you will restore the good bacteria you need to maintain the proper health.