Spiritual Warfare Technologies That Take Down Strongholds

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (see 2 Cor. 10:4). God has given us mighty weapons to pull down strongholds over our lives, but sometimes we need new technologies for the battle.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit revealed to me there are spiritual warfare technologies we need to tap into in this new season. This revelation was unlocked to me while I was on an intercessory prayer call for the "New Weapons for a New Season" conference at City Gate Atlanta next month.

While Clay Nash, founding apostle of The CityGate in Southaven, Mississippi, was sharing revelation about the new weapons, the Holy Spirit started talking to me about spiritual warfare technologies. That didn't make much sense to my natural mind as I associate technologies with my computer, my iPhone or my Kindle e-book reader, but it makes strategic sense after I searched it out.

What Are Spiritual Warfare Technologies?

After I heard these words, I quickly looked up the word "technologies" in Merriam-Webster to try to gain more insight into what Holy Spirit was showing me. The definitions were eye-opening and relevant to all spiritual warriors—and especially those who are not seeing the victories that are assured in Christ's name.

One definition of technology is "the practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area" or "a capability given by the practical application of knowledge." We have the Bible, the Word of God, which itself is the Sword of the

Spirit (Eph. 6:17). Many of us also have prophetic words, words of knowledge, discerning of spirits or some other prophetic insight that helps us in battle.

In other words, we may have the knowledge we need. We may have the revelation about what spirits are operating in the heavenlies. We may see clearly what spirit is attacking our pastor. We may have no doubt about how the enemy is working to hinder God's will in the earth in a particular situation.

Indeed, often we have knowledge. What's sometimes lacking is the practical application of that knowledge in the area or God-defying circumstance we're battling. What we need, then, is practical wisdom. We need spiritual warfare technologies.

Thank God for James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men liberally and without criticism, and it will be given to him." God gives us the weapons of our warfare and the wisdom to apply them.

God's Special Forces

A second definition of technology is "a manner of accomplishing a task especially using technical processes, methods or knowledge" or "the specialized aspects of a particular field of endeavor."

Let's break that down from a spiritual angle. When we enter into battle in this new season, we may need to go about things a little differently than we have in the past. The methods we've always used might not bear the same victorious fruit.

This definition also struck me because one of the other intercessors on the call had a word about specialists—like Special Forces. There are different levels of spiritual warfare. A baby Christian doesn't have the spiritual warfare technologies to battle at the same heights as a seasoned warrior. God needs specialists in this hour to work as part of spiritual warfare teams to dismantle the enemy's plans over

churches, cities and regions.

You Are Armed for Battle

The Holy Spirit also showed me that we already possess every weapon we need for battle, but we sometimes don't know we have them. He showed me that the fruit of the Spirit manifested can be a weapon against the enemy: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (see Gal. 5:22-23). It drives the devil crazy when you walk in love or remain at peace. It's one way we submit ourselves to God, resist the devil and watch him flee (see James 4:7).

Here's the bottom line: Many of us have become accustomed to waging spiritual warfare in a certain way and have seen strong results, but in this new season we may need to seek new spiritual warfare technologies—new practical applications of knowledge and an awareness of the breadth of the weapons we actually possess. Then we will have the "capability given by the practical application of knowledge." We'll have the right weapon applied in the right way at the right time. Amen.

Be sure to sign up for my newsletter to read Part 2 of this series: "When Spiritual Warriors Break Rank."

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

Jennifer LeClaire *is senior editor of* Charisma*. She is also director of Awakening House of Prayer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and author of several books, including* The Next Great Move of God: An Appeal to Heaven for Spiritual Awakening; Mornings With the Holy Spirit, Listening Daily to the Still, Small Voice of God; The Making of a Prophet *and* Satan's Deadly Trio: Defeating the Deceptions of Jezebel, Religion and Witchcraft*. You can visit her website here. You can also join Jennifer on Facebook or follow*

her on Twitter.

The 7 Best Exercises to Make You Stronger

As a CrossFit coach, I constantly meet men and women who, though they may have a fitness background playing various sports or doing recreational activities like running or cycling, are lacking in the strength department for the simple reason that they've never lifted weights before, or at least not challenging ones.

They get excited by workouts that feature cardiovascular movements, such as box jumps, jump roping, sprinting or rowing, but when it comes to barbells, they look at them the way cows look at a new gate: totally unsure what to make of them or whether they can be trusted. They may do a few sidesteps and then scamper away, mooing for the rusty old gates they know and love.

I'm totally kidding (and hope none of my athletes take offense to the bovine metaphor), but you get the point—barbell and dumbbell training can be intimidating. But they're necessary if you want to become stronger.

Before we dive into the seven best strength-training exercises, it's important to address the statement above by deciding if you truly *want* to become stronger. For women especially, who often fear they'll look "bulky" if they weight train, lifting weights might be anathema. (If you are one such woman, I encourage you to check out my article here.)

I have found that being somewhat well-versed about the fitness

routine you're committed to (or, *trying to become* committed to) is terrific intrinsic motivation; having some head knowledge about the benefits of exercise helps us push our bodies as we realize, simply, that this is good for us, not to mention, honoring to God!

Check out the myriad benefits strength training has to offer and see if you don't feel a bit more motivated to pick up a dumbbell afterwards:

- Increased energy: More power and strength translates into **more usable energy**
- Improved digestion and elimination processes
- Improved memory, intellectual capacity and productivity
- Better sleep
- Weight loss: Muscle burns more calories than fat because of the higher rate of metabolism within the muscle tissues
- Stronger bones: increased bone mineral density as a result of the imposed loads being placed upon the bone during the exercise sessions
- Improved symptoms of depression
- Decreased stress
- Added protection from heart disease
- Increased self-confidence, self-perception and outward self-projection
- Body fat percentage decreases
- Lean tissue percentage increases
- Blood pressure readings decrease
- Serum cholesterol decreases
- Range of motion and flexibility increases
- Strength increases
- Lung function increases
- Bone mineral density increases
- Cardiovascular circulation capacity increases

Hopefully, you're wanting to lace up your tennis shoes, find a pair of lifting gloves, and get to the gym! But we have one

pressing question to answer before you go:

Where to start?

If you've never lifted weights before, or it's been a while, it's wisest, in my opinion, to start with the basics, namely the movements that the human body does best. These seven primary strength lifts that we naturally perform fairly well include the:

1. Horizontal push. Pressing/pushing a weight away from the torso. An example of a horizontal push movement is the bench press with either a barbell or set of dumbbells.

2. Horizontal pull. Pulling/rowing a weight towards the torso. An example of a horizontal pull movement is the bent-over row with a barbell or set of dumbbells.

3. Vertical push. Pushing/pressing a weight overhead, away from the body. An example of a vertical push movement is the military press.

4. Vertical pull. Pulling a weight towards the torso from overhead. An example of a vertical pull movement is the pull-up. (One's own bodyweight is usually sufficient, though you may do weighted pull-ups as you progress.)

5. Squat. Bending at the hips and knees while keeping a semi-upright torso, as if reaching for something on the ground in front of you. An example of a squat movement is the barbell squat with weight either across your upper back (back squat) or resting in front across your shoulders (front squat).

6. Lift from the ground. Lifting an object off the ground from a position of maximal leverage (bent knees and hips). An example of this movement is the conventional deadlift with a barbell.

7. Carry. Holding a dumbbell or kettlebell in either hand and walking and/or running with them. An example of a carry is a

farmer’s walk.

While you can perform some or all of those movements in a single workout, I would recommend splitting them up, at least initially, into two days throughout the week. The first day, do the push/pull movements, and on the second day, perform the squats, deadlifts, and carries.

For each movement, perform three sets of 8-12 repetitions at a safe weight, meaning a weight at which you feel comfortable and your form is solid. Rest for two to three minutes between sets, and complete all three sets before moving on to the next exercise.

Make sure you concentrate on perfecting your technique throughout each and every set. Once you’ve nailed these movements, you can begin to superset them, meaning alternating a pushing set (bench press, for example) with a pulling set (bent-over rows), or a deadlift set with a squat set. Supersetting is a very efficient, time-saving way to train because it allows you to cut down on total rest time by only giving one group of muscles time to chill while another group takes the stage.

Now that we have a training plan in place, it’s time for some instructions on the seven movements I recommend you start out with: the barbell bench press, barbell bent-over row, dumbbell press, assisted pull-up, goblet squat, suitcase deadlift, and farmer’s walk. If possible, ask a certified personal trainer, CrossFit coach, or other fitness professional to assist you with your form, or, at the very least, watch a few YouTube videos (from reputable sources!) to help you become confident in performing these exercises safely and proficiently.

Follow this routine for six to eight weeks, adding weight and/or sets and repetitions as needed. (No more than 12 reps; if you can do more than 12 reps without a problem, it’s time to add more weight!)

Barbell Bench Press

a. Load appropriate weight, lie face-up on the flat bench.

b. Grab the barbell above you with an overhand grip slightly wider than shoulder-width.

c. Lift the bar off the rack and slowly lower it until the bar hovers two or three inches above your chest.

d. Pause, then explosively push the barbell back up. Do not lock your elbows at the top of the motion.

Barbell Bent-Over Row

a. Bend knees slightly and bend over bar with back straight. Grasp bar with wide overhand grip.

b. Pull bar to upper waist. Return until arms are extended and shoulders are stretched downward. Repeat.

NOTE: If your lower back becomes rounded due to tight hamstrings, either try bending knees more, or don't position your torso as low.

Strict Dumbbell Press

a. Stand with arms at your sides with a dumbbell in each hand. Feet should be hip-width apart.

b. Raise the dumbbells to shoulder-level, and rotate your hands so your fists face away from your body. Your elbows should be tight to your body with your forearms directly under the dumbbell handles.

c. Push the dumbbells upwards by lengthening your arms. Continue until your arms are completely extended overhead.

d. Lower the weights to start position, just until your upper arms are parallel with the floor.

NOTE: Ensure your back stays in a neutral position. Don't lean forward or backward; doing so could result in increased pressure on the spine, which may lead to injury.

Assisted Pull-Up With Resistance Band

a. Place your foot in the resistance band so that the band centers in the middle of your shoe. Hold onto the bar with a grip that's wider than shoulder-width, and wrap the free foot in front of the foot in the band. Press down through the band so that you are essentially standing up inside of it.

b. Imagine you want to bring the bar down too your chest. This will help you pull up toward the bar until your chin is over it. Really squeeze your shoulder blades together to engage your back muscles.

c. Slowly, with control, lower yourself back down to the start position. Do not lock out your arms at the bottom, but maintain a slight bend in your elbows.

Goblet Squat with Kettlebell or Dumbbell

a. Either hold a kettlebell by its horns or the end of a dumbbell at your chest. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, torso upright.

b. With the weight against your chest, squat down with the goal of having your elbows slide down along the inside of your knees. It's okay to have the elbows push the knees out a bit as you descend. Focus on keeping your back flat.

c. Rise out of the squat by driving through your heels.

Suitcase Deadlift

a. Hold one dumbbell to the side of your body. Feet are hip-width apart.

b. With shoulders back, chest lifted, and lower back in a

natural arch, being lowering your body by pushing your hips back. Then bend your knees and continue moving your rear back while maintaining the arch in your lower back.

c. The dumbbell should be lowering in a straight path in line with your shoulder blade. When you lose the natural curve in your spine and begin to round your back, stop lowering and reverse the motion.

d. To initiate the lift, use your glute muscles to powerfully thrust your hips forward. Focus on keeping your torso level and not leaning or twisting toward the dumbbell.

NOTE: As your flexibility and mobility increases, you can lower the dumbbell more and more until you can touch the floor. At that point, you can try beginning the movement from the floor.

Farmer's Walk

a. Grip a pair of dumbbells, then lift them up by driving through your heels, keeping your back straight and your head up.

b. Walk taking short, quick steps, and don't forget to breathe. Move for a given distance, typically 50-100 feet, as fast as possible.

Have fun, and feel free to Tweet me @dianamtyler with any questions.

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For the original article, visit dianaandersontyler.com.

10 Things Your Son Needs From You

We think your son needs everything from you. However, the following 10 things add up to a solid start, and they are gateway concepts to so much more.

But there’s a balance at play here. You see, ultimately, your job is to make sure that there’s nothing your son needs from you (other than love). Too many parents create a toxic culture of dependency where, we kid you not, Mom or Dad even contact prospective employers to cover for their child’s poor interview, sorry work ethic or subpar resume to pressure the hire.

Our job is to raise young people in love and security, but also make sure they are well-equipped to leave home and make it on their own. In order to accomplish that goal, here are 10 things your son needs from you:

1. Be there. Your son needs your presence. Your son needs quantity playtime with his dad, not just quality playtime. He needs you at school conferences, soccer games, church events and mealtimes. Mealtimes are especially crucial to child development, and your son needs his dad. He needs you to wish him good-night and he needs to watch you live. He needs to watch you treat his mother right, to watch you make decisions, to watch you value the right things.

2. Respect. It’s a cliché that what all men want, ultimately, is respect. Ditto your son.

3. Responsibility. One way to earn respect is to demonstrate responsibility. He can’t do this without your help, your

expectations and your coaching.

4. Trust. Along with responsibility comes trust. This is a form of believing in your son. Don't badger, but expect. Trust suggests respect. Respect leads to trust. Trust accepted equals responsible behavior.

5. Boundaries. Your son needs boundaries he can understand. Fact is: There is more freedom with secure boundaries than without. Obviously these vary with age and maturity.

6. Accountability. We're not talking about stalking your son, checking up on him every instant or calling him to task for every detail. However, real-world preparation must involve holding to account, following through and the understanding that every choice he makes is potentially open for review.

7. Love. Your son doesn't need to simply know that you love him, he needs to feel it, see it in action, and understand that it's as deep and wide as the ocean. Love is the greatest source of strength either of you have. Embrace love; own it, practice it and tell him how you feel.

8. Affection and touch. Too many men are confused about affection. They confuse distance with manliness and nothing could be further from the truth. So hug. Express your feelings. And above all, don't be afraid to say, "I love you" to your son. Don't close him out from affection because of your own fear. Your son very much needs physical contact with his dad. A hand on the shoulder, hugs and embraces, and holding his hand when he's younger. Physical touch is key to human development, from infancy on up. Your son needs your physical touch.

9. Advice vis-à-vis "the 'S' word": Your son needs your advice. He needs you to teach him about love and respect. He needs his dad to tell and to show him how to treat other people. What is appropriate when it comes to girls? What is

right and wrong? Your son needs you to talk to him about sex.

10. Example. Your son needs your example. If you've been a poor example, then he needs to hear you admit that and then he needs to see you find your way. He needs to have a dad around whom he can look up to, model, admire and emulate. Your son needs his dad to be his hero.

Sound Off: What do you think is the most important thing our sons need from us as fathers?

Huddle Up With Your Sons: What is one thing you need from me that I am not giving you?

For the original article, visit allprodad.com.

Study: Gluten Linked to Brain and Nervous Disorders

Wheat, rye, spelt, kamut and barley all contain an ordinary protein called gluten. It is a storage protein which is sticky and binds to the walls of the small intestines. It quite commonly results in immune system and digestive conditions.

Gluten Brain Connection

The most prevalent disorder associated with gluten sensitivities is referred to as Celiac disease. It causes the villi of the small intestines to flatten. There are also a number of immune system reactions that result due to gluten sensitivity and this can affect a wide range of various tissues. When this happens the term non-celiac gluten sensitivity is used or NCGS. NCGS is considered an epidemic, which is thought to be responsible for inflammatory, brain and

nervous system disorders.

Clinical studies have revealed that the correlation of these disorders and gluten sensitivity present in most all neurological systems, which includes the spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. Movement disorders, cerebellar disease, neuropathy and numerous other conditions are thought to have been triggered by gluten in a very large number of instances.

Consuming gluten may have negative effects on the body that can continue for months after the actual consumption. The immune system of many people today is extremely stressed as a result of any number of causes, including vitamin D3 deficiencies, parasites and environmental toxins. For this reason it is crucial that these individuals strictly adhere to a gluten-free diet.

Elements of Gluten Sensitivity

The sticky component of gluten is known as glutenin, and gliadin is the protein portion. The latter can be broken down into gamma, omega and alpha gliadins. In most cases, lab tests only examine the alpha gliadin antibodies; however, these are only a minute portion of the entire molecule. At those times lab tests will have negative results because the patient is actually affected by the other portions of the gluten molecule. Commercial food processing commonly includes the deamidation of gliadin molecules to create a substance which is more water soluble. Gliadin, that has been through this process, incites serious immune system reactions in countless individuals. This is not indicated on those types of tests either.

Going Gluten-Free Can Have Severe Side Effects

A group of opioid peptides known as gluten exorphins are produced when the body digests gluten-based proteins. There is a medical test available to determine if the body is producing antibodies to prodynorphin and/or gluteomorphin. Introducing a

gluten free diet to individuals who have an opioid sensitivity can result in serious withdrawal symptoms, similar to those withdrawing from heroine. This may include dramatic mood swings, severe depression, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea or constipation. These symptoms can continue for days or even weeks.

Immuno-Responses and Nervous System Dysfunction

The human immune system can sometimes mistake one protein for some other protein. When this happens it is called immune cross reactivity. Gluten proteins have many similarities with those found in thyroid and nervous system tissues. The body may sometimes produce antibodies to these normal tissues during the process of producing them in response to gluten.

This cross reaction can lead to brain damage as well as damage to the thyroid and/or additional neurological tissues. Individuals only need to consume a very small amount of gluten for this to take place. The most common area for this cross reaction to take place is in the cerebellum. This results in vertigo and anxiety, as well as the loss of balance and motor control. There are several studies published on *Pub Med* which report on the effects of Celiac disease or gluten sensitivity on psychiatric and neurological manifestations.

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For the original article, visit drcolbert.com.

Prophecy: A Tsunami of Perversion Will Rise

Some months ago—before the megachurch pastors starting to embrace practicing homosexuals into leadership and before the Presbyterian Church USA rewrote its constitution to define marriage as "between two people," the Holy Spirit gave me a disturbing word about the perversion we're about to see.

Notice I said "about to see." We're seeing the rapid rise of perversion even now but I believe this is just the beginning. We'll see the rise of false prophets who deceive many because, Jesus said, of the increase of wickedness (see Matt. 24:12). The mystery of lawlessness was working in Paul's day (see 2 Thess. 2:7) and that mystery is revealing the depth of its wicked plot in our day.

When I shared the prophetic word below with my intercessors, it troubled them. I understand why. It troubled me also. I decided to hold it back and pray it through but the Holy Spirit recently reminded me of these words again. These words should not breed fear but should open our eyes to what's coming, and what, in fact, is already beginning to manifest right before our eyes. Here is the word:

Calling Evil Good and Good Evil

"A tsunami of perversion and all manner of wicked sin is headed toward this nation. You've only yet seen the rumblings of what the enemy has planned. For many in your nation have called good evil and called evil good. Many in this nation have not believed you will reap what you sow.

"You have sown iniquity—for decades—and you have taken the

hand of perversion. You have walked in step with abominations rather than resisting the temptations to deny my Word and my Son. The perversion in this land will increase and increase and increase.

"There will come a day when morality is no longer merely relative but is persecuted. There will come a day when evil is considered good and good is considered evil. When that day comes, those who are hidden in the shadow of My wings will be insulated from the abominations around them.

"I will raise up the likes of Abraham and Moses to deliver the righteous out of the hand of the wicked in that day. I will shield those who run into my Name. But no longer look and no longer think that you will turn the tide by your prayers alone. These things must be so. I warn you now to fear not, but to ready your hearts. Buy your oil. Be ready for My coming."

It's Not Just Sexual Perversion

Yes, we've seen the rumblings of this rising perversion but I believe it's going to grow darker still. When you think of perversion you probably immediately think of sexual perversion—and I believe that's part of it. The Bible has plenty to say about sexual perversion in Romans 1:21-28 alone and we're seeing that passage playing out right now.

But sexual immorality—polygamy, homosexuality, adultery, fornication and legal bestiality that I've so often addressed—is not the only kind of perversion. There's perversion of laws, perversion of justice, perversion of speech, perversion of freedom—and most importantly, perversion of God's Word. Apostasy is rising. The Great Falling Away is underway.

After praying over this and letting it sit for some months, it became clear to me that the root of this tsunami of perversion is actually the perversion of God's Word itself. You've seen a

trickle of this, but it's about to break out like a flood. Again, we're seeing prominent pastors and entire denominations perverting God's Word, twisting it to defend and justify perversion itself and suggesting the rest of us are legalistic or unenlightened about the truth. It may have started with the gay marriage doctrine but it won't end there.

We need to redeem the time, because the days are evil (see Eph. 5:16). We need to make an appeal to heaven for spiritual awakening. I believe the people who walk in darkness can see a great light (see Is. 9:2) if we refuse to stop contending for revival.

Our Only Hope Is a Great Awakening

Back in 2007, the Lord told me things in this nation would grow darker before His light shined brightly again. I believe things are on a course to grow very dark very rapidly. But I also believe in the power of prayer and faith-inspired action. I also believe in the power of preaching the gospel. I also believe God wants to bring transforming revival—a Third Great Awakening—to this nation.

It's up to us to stand in the gap. It's up to us to make up the hedge. It's up to us to weep between the porch and the altar. It's up to us to pray without ceasing. It's up to us to decree and declare God's will on the earth. It's up to us to speak the truth in love. It's up to us to take the gospel to our city. Yes, I believe it will grow darker and the perversion will rise, but I believe the glory of the Lord will rise and shine upon us again if we are faithful to obey His commands:

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall rise upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon you. The nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your

rising" (Is. 60:1-3). Amen.

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

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

What Are the Best Parenting Internet Controls?

The world of naval warfare has changed from state-controlled weapons to the hands of rogue groups and terrorists. The threats are now more from quickly moving swarming boats that operate in shallow water.

In response, the United States Navy has commissioned a new fleet of ships that can out run and maneuver smaller vessels in shallow areas. Utilizing new technology they can also hit small, quickly moving targets from a long distance with amazing accuracy. Staying ahead of the enemy is imperative.

In the same way, new technologies have given birth to threats to our families. The specter of porn and other inappropriate material can more easily find its way to our children. We must stay a step ahead of these threats by utilizing the best countermeasures.

Here are the best parental internet controls to keep your family safe according to *PC Magazine*:

Net Nanny—Cost: $39.99 per year. This seemed to be the best-rated and most cost-efficient choice. It filters the Web and can record instant messages. It will even send alerts when conversations become inappropriate. It also contains game filtering based on the gaming rating system. You can also manage it remotely.

According to *PC Magazine* one downside to consider is the social network monitoring may be limited. However, it is still the highest rated.

AVG Family Safety—Cost $19.99 per year (Limited to 3 computers). This one is still highly rated and half the price of Net Nanny, but it is limited to three computers. That is most likely where the price difference comes into play. It contains most of the features you want from parental control software.

Its limitations are no cap on Internet time or summary of activity on social networking. Again, it received the same rating as Net Nanny.

K9 Web Protection—Cost: Free. My favorite price in the world. Definitely worth a try, but you may get what you paid for. It is more limited than the two options above and so is not rated as high. It filters questionable websites, can limit Internet access and logs all websites visited.

In terms of limitations: Everyone is configured to the same settings. There isn't IM monitoring or controls and no remote

management.

Given the price it is hard to resist this option, but choose wisely.

Sound Off: What is your favorite Internet protection? Huddle up with your kids tonight and ask, “Have you ever seen something you wish you had never seen?”

Related Resource: Internet Safety Rules

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9 Factors That Can Enhance or Hinder Your Sleep

Lack of sleep is a serious problem in the United States. Recent surveys indicate almost half of all Americans do not get enough shut-eye. Sleep deprivation can lead to serious health problems. Lack of sleep often causes us to overeat because when we’re tired the hunger hormone kicks into high gear.

Some people get less sleep than they need by choice. These are the people who make the conscious decision to stay up late working (or playing) then get up early. Those people would be wise to re-think their choice to burn the candle at both ends and exercise self-discipline by getting the proper amount of sleep.

In the short-term as well as in the long-term, they will reap the health benefits. You know you are not getting enough sleep if you do not feel refreshed in the morning. Other clues are irritability, grogginess, difficulty concentrating or staying awake during meetings or classes, and trying to catch-up on

sleep on weekends.

Aside from people who choose to get less sleep than their body requires, there are millions of people who would like to get a full eight hours of sleep and try to do so but can’t. This is called insomnia. There are two types of insomniacs: people who can’t fall asleep to begin with, and people who fall asleep just fine but who wake up in the middle of the night and can’t get back to sleep.

Since so many people have difficulty sleeping, sleeping pills are some of the most widely prescribed medications in America and some of the best-selling over-the-counter medications. Sadly, however, sleeping pills usually do more harm than good. For many, the first step tends to be sleeping pills when, in reality, it should be one of the last. According to sleep experts, this medication is addictive, can have serious side effects, and can cause drowsiness during the day.

Instead of taking a sleeping pill, it’s better to figure out what’s causing the sleep trouble and fix that. Many sleep disorders are brought on by underlying physical problems, like obesity or emotional issues like depression.

Many doctors say that by addressing those root causes and changing some lifestyle choices, you can get the sleep you want and need without drugs.

1. Diet. One reason for sleeplessness can be eating or drinking the wrong things. Too much caffeine can be a culprit so cut out coffee, tea, soda and even chocolate, eight hours before bedtime or better yet, altogether. Don’t eat within two hours of bedtime and avoid big meals and alcohol, which can knock you out but later wake you up. Nix the spicy or fatty foods. They cause heartburn, which interferes with sleep.

2. Environment. In order to really get a great night’s sleep, turn your bedroom into a true sleep chamber. That means eliminating anything your brain associates with wakefulness.

So when you're in bed, don't do things like watch TV, pay the bills or have tense conversations.

In fact, if you worry in bed, think about something calm or get out of bed and go to another room. Then once you are in that other room, get a pen and literally write down your problems. This subconsciously transfers them from your mind to the paper, relieving stress so you can go back to bed.

Prayer before bed and when you have difficulty sleeping is very effective. As the Bible says, "cast your cares upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).

3. Exercise. Regular exercise, particularly in the afternoon, can have you sleeping like a baby. Many people find they no longer need sleep aids or anti-depressants after starting and sticking to a regular exercise program that involves at least 30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise daily as well as weight training. Finish your work-out at least two or three hours before bedtime.

4. Bathing. Taking a warm shower or bath before bed is a great way to calm and soothe. Using fragrant bath products can also help.

5. Temperature. Make sure your bedroom is cool. The temperature should not exceed 68 degrees. Do not use a lot of heavy blankets. A cool temperature aids a good night's sleep. Many people don't realize they wake up because they are too hot. There are even cooling pillows available at home stores.

6. Sight and sound. Make sure your bedroom is dark. Avoid nightlights, light from other rooms or the hallway and electronics. Make sure no light is coming in from outside the window. You may want to invest in some thick curtains or blinds. Use a sleep mask or earplugs if necessary.

White noise machines are very helpful to block out sounds that might wake you, such as traffic, snoring, or the air

conditioner or heater turning on and off.

7. Consistency. Make sure you go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekends. Our bodies do better when we stick with the same schedule.

8. Smoking. Cigarettes contain nicotine, which is a stimulant, meaning it keeps us awake just like coffee.

9. Sleep apnea. If these tips don't work, see your doctor about getting tested for sleep apnea. This is a condition where a person's oxygen supply is cut off many times during the night, preventing a restful night's sleep. Sleep apnea is caused by the airway closing during sleep.

A good way to recognize sleep apnea is the person gasps and chokes during the night. People with sleep apnea are usually prescribed a C-PAP machine to use at night, that keeps the airway open. People with sleep apnea often find that when the use the C-PAP machine they experience restful sleep and have increased energy and lose weight.

For the original article, visit cbn.com.

The Cemetery of Fear Can Paralyze Your Kingdom Efforts

In Matthew 25 Jesus told a parable about a man who went on a journey to a faraway land. Before he left, he entrusted three servants with various "talents," or money.

Rather than letting his money sit in a vault, the master decided to divide it among three servants so they could invest it and his fortune could increase while he was away. To the

first servant the master gave five talents, to the second servant he gave two talents and to the third servant he gave one talent.

The first two servants invested their money wisely, and it doubled in value. The third servant was concerned about the possibility of losing his talent, so he buried it in the ground. When the master returned, it was a time of reckoning.

With the first two servants, the master was very pleased, but with the third servant who buried the one talent, the master was very angry. The master called him a wicked and lazy servant. He repossessed the one talent the servant had been given and had him cast out into the darkness "where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 25:30).

I want you to notice the reason this servant gave for burying his talent. The servant said, "So I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground" (Matt. 25:25). He buried his talent in the ground because of fear.

Fear causes many people to bury their talents in the ground. I'm not talking about the ground in your backyard. Genesis 2:7 says God formed man from the dust of the ground—*we* are the ground! People bury their talents within themselves because of fear—fear of failure, fear of being mocked, fear of hard work, fear of the unknown, spirits of fear, and fear of man, just to name a few.

I think one of the most tragic places you could ever visit is a cemetery, not because of the people who are buried there but because of what is buried within the people who are buried there: books and songs that were never written, sermons that were never preached, forgiveness that was never granted, inventions that were never developed—so much potential that was never realized. So much has been buried and lost for all eternity because someone was afraid of being hurt, afraid of criticism, afraid of rejection, afraid of financial difficulty

or physical danger.

Evangelist Leonard Ravenhill said author and preacher A.W. Tozer once told him, “I’m not too worried about the judgment on my Christian life. It’s the things I could have done but didn’t do that worry me.” My friends, one day we are all going to stand before the Master and give an account of what He has entrusted to us. Oh, that we would fear that day above all and be willing to risk everything so on that day we would not be ashamed.

Notice that the servant was cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Scholars disagree about whether or not this verse is referring to hell, but one thing is certain (and I think it is the main point), it is talking about deep regret, sorrow and remorse over something that has been lost forever and can never be undone.

Many people talk about the emotions they will feel when they arrive in heaven. There are popular songs about how we will dance and be overwhelmed with joy. But many will experience a very different emotion when they arrive in heaven—regret. In that moment all of their earthly fears will seem so impotent and distant, a hazy memory, like a dream that you can’t quite remember. But the impact of those fears will be felt for eternity.

It will be too late to go back and do what should have been done, and wave after wave of regret will wash over many people. No wonder Revelation 21:4 says Jesus will have to wipe the tears from their eyes.

This Bible study has been taken from chapter 12 of Daniel Kolenda’s book, Live Before You Die*.*

Daniel Kolenda*, a missionary evangelist, has led more than 10 million people to Christ face-to-face through massive, open-air evangelistic campaigns in some of the most dangerous and remote locations on earth. He is president and CEO of Christ*

for all Nations and hosts an internationally syndicated television program.

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9 Signs of Improper Blood Circulation

Every 34 seconds, an individual in the United States suffers from a heart attack, and every minute someone dies from a cardiovascular-related disorder. Out of the 720,000 individuals who suffer from heart attacks annually, it is the second time for about 205,000 of them. One of the most common causes of this is poor blood circulation.

Poor Blood Circulation

Heart attacks often occur with no prior warning, unless the sufferer is aware of the signs. Plaque, scar tissue, fatty material, and calcium accumulate in the vital arteries, which are responsible for supplying the heart with blood. The inhibition of blood flow causes angina or chest pain. A complete block results in a heart attack.

Signs of Improper Blood Circulation

There are several signs and causes of poor circulation. It is extremely important to be aware of all of these. It is also essential to consult a medical professional if you experience any of them. Ignoring the signs, or simply brushing them off, could be the difference between life and death.

- Constant extreme fatigue or lethargy
- Edema or swelling of lower extremities
- Tingling or numbness in any of the extremities

- Cold extremities such as feet, toes, hands and/or fingers
- Legs that feel achy or heavy
- Sores that will not heal within the normal amount of time
- Constant dizzy spells
- Poor or declining memory
- Muscle cramps or throbbing, shooting pains

Certain disorders can result in poor circulation such as Peripheral Artery Disease, varicose veins, Diabetes and obesity. Raynaud's Disease, which is another, causes the arteries of toes and hands to constrict. Two extremely prevalent causes of poor circulation are smoking and consistently consuming large amounts of fried, overly processed and fast foods.

Foods to Promote Healthy Blood Flow

There are a number of foods that can promote healthy blood flow. Certain foods react in the body similar to anti-coagulants. One of the best medicines for improper blood circulation are specific foods. Citruline is a compound found in watermelon and the body converts this into L-arginine, which is very helpful in enhancing blood flow. Consuming goji berries is excellent for blood circulation.

Both salmon and avocados contain heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids. They also promote healthy blood flow. Though keep in mind that there has been some concern of farm-raised salmon containing toxic levels of mercury. Garlic adds wonderful flavor to numerous dishes, and ingesting it strengthens arteries. It also inhibits the accumulation of plaque in the arteries.

Capsicum frutescens is found in Cayenne Pepper and reduces the stickiness of platelets. It contains vitamin C and E, which promotes circulation. Gingko biloba is rich in antioxidants,

which assist in removing contaminants from the circulatory system.

Ginger Root is also said to promote healthy blood circulation. Sunflower seeds increase healthy blood flow, and sunflower oil is often recommended as a healthy alternative oil for heart patients. And for those chocolate lovers out there, there is a bit of great news. Dark chocolate has been shown to improve circulation.

There are a number of exercises that may be incorporated into weekly or daily routine to improve blood circulation. Swimming, biking, jogging and walking all enlarge heart muscles and increase its blood-pumping abilities. Exercises specifically geared toward cardio, such as kick boxing, skiing and running, are excellent exercises for circulation and the heart as well. Resistance and anaerobic routines may be the most helpful for improving blood circulation. This can be weight training, pull-ups and sit-ups.

A good daily exercise does not have to be high impact to help with strengthening the heart. Hiking is also wonderful and rewarding. Taking the kids and/or dog for a stroll in the park provides exercise as well as quality time.

If you feel you are experiencing any of these symptoms, or want to change your diet or lifestyle, please consult a physician before doing so.

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Why Are Your Kids Texting and Not Talking?

Have you ever tried to have a conversation with your child only to be quickly interrupted as they respond to a friend's text? If so, you're not alone.

In the Merrill home, my wife, Susan, and I have had more than a few conversations with our children where one of their friends butts in on our conversation with a text. It can be frustrating, can't it? I'm sure there are many children who have experienced the same thing with their parents.

To be fair, our kids have grown up with technology as a part of their everyday existence. It's almost as if it's part of their DNA. Yes, it is frustrating when they, or we, get too engrossed in phones and seem unattached and unaware of what's around us, but we need to understand what's behind it before we can do something about it.

Before you assume the worst about your non-communicative child or grandchild, consider some of these reasons that may be behind their overuse of phones and other technology:

- **Avoiding awkward situations and conversations**: Children avoid awkwardness as much as they can. They often already feel awkward about themselves, their appearance

and their place in the world. They may feel a sense of relief if they can avoid such feelings by being heads down on a chat or in a game.

- **Generational comfort in digital communication**: People find it so much easier to text than to talk, especially young men. They don't see it automatically as an alternative to face-to-face communication, but simply one of many ways to communicate.
- **ICYMI**: ICYMI is an acronym for "In Case You Missed It." It pervades social media and news media today. It's used to trigger curiosity about news, marketing messages and media announcements. But over time, the constant barrage of ICYMI messages creates a bit of anxiety in people, stirring a fear of being out of the loop on what everyone else is talking about and reacting to.
- **FOMO**: In addition to viral "news" dominating the ICYMI trends in social media, Fear of Missing Out, or "FOMO", creates a similar social anxiety in young people. Their tech is their connection to the outside world. If they fall behind in what's going on with friends or in those social arenas, they begin to feel like they're falling out of touch with people, causes and interests.

In my next blog, I'll offer some suggestions about What to Do When Your Kids Are Texting Instead of Talking.

What are some of the other reasons you think your kids, grandkids, most of us struggle with being absorbed in our technology to the detriment of our relationships? Please comment in the section below.

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