

The 'Dirty Dozen' List of Foods You Should Only Buy Organic

You should never buy apples that aren't organic. For the fifth year in a row, apples topped the Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list as the fruit with the highest levels of pesticides.

Peaches, nectarines and grapes took second, third and fourth place. But the EWG found that two types of produce, green leafy greens and hot peppers, were so contaminated with pesticides that they deserved a category of their own, the "Dirty Dozen Plus."

One of the main reasons people eat organic is to avoid pesticides, which are used liberally in growing many foods. A study published in February in *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that they are doing their bodies a favor. Researchers reported that people who ate organic fruits and vegetables had significantly lower amounts of organophosphates (OPs) in their bodies than those who ate conventionally grown produce.

OPs are components of many insecticides and herbicides, and they have been linked to numerous health problems. A 2010 study found a link between OPs and an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease. Another study the same year found a dramatic increase in the risk of ADHD in children with high levels of OP residues in their urine.

Almost two-thirds of the produce samples tested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture contained pesticide residues, and the Environmental Working Group (EWG)'s "Dirty Dozen" list contains the most. With apples as the "dirtiest," the rest of the list is as follows: peaches, nectarines, strawberries,

grapes, celery, spinach, sweet bell peppers, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, imported snap peas and potatoes.

The EWG considers the “Dirty Dozen Plus”—green leafy greens and hot peppers—particularly toxic to human health.

The “Clean 15” list, on the other hand, includes fruits and vegetables found to have the least amount of pesticides. Avocados topped the list, with only 1 percent showing pesticide residue. Other items on the clean list include sweet corn, pineapples, cabbage, sweet peas (frozen), onions, asparagus, mangoes, papayas, kiwi, eggplant, grapefruit, cantaloupe and cauliflower.

“Know which ones have the highest amounts of pesticides so you can opt for the organic versions, if available and affordable, or grab a snack off the ‘Clean Fifteen,’” said EWG senior analyst Sonya Lunder.

The EWG estimates that people can lower their pesticide exposure 90 percent by avoiding the most contaminated fruits and vegetables and eating the least contaminated instead.

“The bottom line is people do not want to eat pesticides with their fruits and vegetables,” said EWG’s president and co-founder Ken Cook. “That’s why we will continue to tell shoppers about agricultural chemicals that turn up on their produce, and we hope we will inform, and ultimately, empower them to eat cleaner.”

For the original article, visit .

Millennial Revivalist Tore Down Idols, Raised the Dead

The Holy Spirit called her into ministry with Matthew 10—Jesus gave His disciples authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. The only problem is she was illiterate. When she heard Holy Spirit's instruction she had to find someone to read her the words from the Bible.

Her name is Anna. Both her parents were dead when the Lord called her and she goes down in revival history as one of the most authoritative messengers of awakening in the 20th century. According Dr. Kurt Koch's writings, Anna received four songs from the Lord—gospel messages that caused lost souls to come to Christ during the Revival at Timor.

"She is an excellent 'home' missionary, and as she goes from house to house, she asks the people to bring their idols out and to destroy them," Koch writes in his book *Revival in Indonesia*. "She has the gift of prophecy, too, and is able to tell people to their faces what sins they have committed."

Supernatural Manifestations

As Koch chronicles it, one day Anna met a blind woman. After leading her to the Lord, the Holy Spirit commanded Anna to pour water into the woman's eyes so she could be healed. The woman was in fact healed. After that, Anna asked the Lord for the power to heal the blind and went on to heal 10 blind people in Jesus' name after they confessed and repented of their sins.

"Once, when Anna met a person who was deaf, the Lord said to her, 'Put your finger into his ear and pray with him.' She obeyed and the man was immediately healed," Koch writes. "On

other occasions, she has even prayed for those who have died, although only if the Lord directly commanded her to do so. She never took the responsibility of the decision upon herself. Once, she was led to a two-year-old child who had died. After she had prayed for him, he was raised up just like Jairus' daughter of so long ago."

Koch tells the story of the Holy Spirit sending Anna to visit a minister's home. His three children were always getting sick.

"In a vision prior to her visit, she was shown a two-edged sword. On arriving at the house she discovered that such a sword had in fact been in the house since the time of the Dutch, and that it had an occult history behind it," Koch says. "She told the minister that the sword would have to be destroyed. Afterwards the children were completely healed."

A Bold Ambassador for Christ

All of this was during the Revival in Timor in the 1960s. We need more Annas today. She was only 25 years old when the Lord called her. She couldn't read or write—but she could listen and obey. She followed the Holy Spirit's leading and the result was repentance, salvation, healings and miracles. She was bold enough, as Koch chronicled, even to talk to pastors and government officials about their sin. In 1968, as the story goes, government officials accepted Christ after her gospel message.

Yes, we need more Annas today, so why don't we see them? I believe one reason is because repentance is lacking. I believe a second reason is because we don't have the faith for it. I believe a third reason is because the church is so busy with programs that we sometimes fail to remain sensitive enough to Holy Spirit's instructions to "put your finger into his ear and pray with him" or "pour some water into her eyes that she might be healed."

The good news is I believe the Annas are ready to rise. I believe the remnant is ready to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit and accept His assignments to preach the gospel, ask people to tear down their idols, deal with sin, cast out demons and heal all manner of sickness and disease. I believe an end-times army of prophetic messengers is being prepared even now. I believe we're on the cusp of the next great move of God.

Believe with me! God is not done with America—or whichever nation you are from. God wants to bring revival. He wants to wake up His bride so they can sing His praises in the earth, lift up His Son, walk in supernatural power and glorify His name. God wants to break out. He wants to move in an unprecedented way. Let's bring out our idols and destroy them, repent and believe the gospel!

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.

5 More Things Men Should Do to Protect Their Marriage

Just over a year ago, I was reading through the latest *Men's Health Magazine*. In the process, I came across a page full of statistics—stats that were annoying and disturbing.

They were all about men and their inability to stay away from lust and hold off their eyes from looking at other women. Some of these stats dealt with single men, some were for married men.

As a married man, I was hit in two ways. One, I was frustrated with the bad results of the questions and two I was even more frustrated with the fact that no resolution was offered to the men reading that article.

A couple of weeks later, I published the article “5 Things Every Married Man Should Do Around Single Women.”

With more than a half million views on and 247,000 shares on alone, it's obvious that this subject is a big deal in this culture.

Regardless of the many negative comments and the many articles that have been written against it, I still believe the simple truths mentioned in the first article hold truer than ever. They are little, yet very effective tools that every married man can use once he decides to give his heart over to one woman in front of God and in front of many other important people. He made his choice at that moment, and now he needs to live it out every day in his marriage.

The other things people can't deny are the search results. The title of these posts draw in both men and women trying to figure out what to do in tested situations. I truly believe that God has used these simple truths to positively impact the

lives of thousands of men and women.

Want more proof? I'll send you the search results.

I believe we also live in a culture where it's easy to get stats on how much men watch pornography, how often they look at women in a lustful way or how often men think about being with a woman other than their wife. But I think we need to be checking the stats on other questions.

For example, what efforts beyond your vows are you putting in to build up your marriage? When was the last time you prayed with or for your wife? Do you even remember what you said when you recited your vows? I say we challenge men with these kinds of questions and make them reconsider their actions towards their wife and other women.

What would your answers look like to those questions?

As you consider those answers, I want to challenge you with five more things every married man should do to protect their marriage.

And keep in mind with these five more things, that these are not meant to show disrespect to women that are not your wife, they are methods for you to use when you feel the situation is necessary for them. As a mature man actively growing in his walk with Christ, you will know when these moments arrive.

1. Imagine your wife is in the room with you. Take a moment to think about recent conversations or encounters with other women. When you were alone, were you more likely to give her that second look? Were you more likely to engage in conversation that one would say was more than professional or friendly? When you think back on those times, would your wife had approved of your actions? Would Jesus?

Early in my own marriage I struggled with this concept. I mean it wasn't too long ago that I was single and free to do and

say as I pleased, but now I was married. As my wife and I were together much more often, I started to realize my wife's responses when I engaged in conversation with other women. She started to let me know when I was coming across "flirty" rather than "friendly." At first I didn't understand and was even offended, but I came to realize that if the way I acted towards other women made her feel uncomfortable, then I needed to change.

I have come to learn after almost 10 years of marriage that the way I act around other women when I am with my wife is the way I need to act around them all the time.

2. Strive not to meet alone. I am fully aware that this step may not always be possible in a professional type setting, but even in this type of setting certain precautions can be taken to protect the integrity of both you and your co-worker. For example, you could leave your door open. You could attempt to meet in a place that is quiet but is still open to the public. You could invite a trusted colleague to join the conversation. There are always options, so don't make excuses that there are none.

Have you ever had an experience where you and your friends were supposed to all meet up and hang out, and you find out quickly that only you and a female friend showed up? What did you do or would you do? I honestly can't think of any good reason to stay there and "hang out" with her. Even if she is a trusted friend who knows your wife, both she and you should respect each other enough to say your good byes and reschedule with the group. I don't call this type of situation dishonoring to the friend, I call this honoring her and my marriage.

And if this does happen, I would still let my wife know about the situation.

3. Call your wife to ask/confirm details. Guys, I personally

feel that this is one of the most important things to remember when encountering other women. I look at this point in two ways. One, you may be put in a situation where you don't have a choice in the matter. In terms of work, you may need to be in a particular meeting with another woman or you may be told to take a long ride or trip with another woman. In these cases, you need to be honest about the details and the activities and you need to man up in terms of staying professional and friendly only. And second, there may be those moments when you have a choice in the matter. A woman asks you for a ride, what do you do? Well, it's pretty simple, you either explain that you're uncomfortable with the situation and explain why and she is mature enough to understand or you call your wife and review her feelings on the situation. What would you do?

Here's a good question to keep in mind. "Is what I am about to do or where I am about to go something I feel comfortable sharing with my wife?"

4. Guard your online/texting activity. In all of the other points, we have really discussed actual, physical occurrences like what to do when you're with your wife, how to handle actual situations at work or with friends. But what we can't miss is the online or texting activity. As smart devices and social media get bigger, this will only become a larger area of concern in our marriages.

Here are a few ways I've chosen to handle online activity. One, I have chosen to not accept certain friend requests by women that I have known very well or use to be attracted to in the past. Even if they are married or single, I honestly don't need to know what they are up to these days or hear about any issues they might be experiencing. Another option is to accept the requests, but to be very cautious in the way you approach the relationship. Earlier in my marriage, I had an old female friend hit me up online.

At first it was just about the past, but as things went on in the conversation, she started to tell me more personal and up to date issues in her life. STOP! Yes, this is where my wife stopped me. From then on, if I am approached via message or text, my wife gets alerted first. And if it does need a response, I include my wife's opinions and thoughts in my response.

Online activity and texting may make it easier to cheat, but it also makes it easier to get caught.

5. View the relationship similar to your mother, sister or daughter. Wow, every time I think about this point, God really makes me consider my actions towards other women. As I was the youngest child with two older sisters, I can really relate to this idea. And I don't think this point applies to the points mentioned above, but deals more with the heart of the situation. As I say we, as married men, should be careful and take certain precautions around recently separated or single women; I also know there is a heart aspect to it all.

My relationships with my mother and two sisters are not really of close friendship anymore (as I've moved away years ago), but instead is one of love and grace. No matter what happens or no matter how long it's been since I've seen them, I still strive to show them love and grace in the moments we are together. The only person I can relate to with that is Jesus Christ. It didn't matter whom he came into contact with, the blind, the crazy, the prostitutes, etc. He always chose to show love and give grace. We can do the same in these relationships.

All the women you encounter are daughters of God and should be treated as such. If thinking about them in terms of sister, mother or daughter helps; then pursue that option. As you pursue to honor God and your marriage first, and engage in the nine points listed, always do it under the umbrella of love and grace.

Want more ways to build and protect your marriage? [Click here](#)

As I said before, I challenge every man to consider each point and take the necessary steps to strengthen his marriage!

Share one of your own tips or story of personal experience in the comments below.

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

For the original article, visit .

A Practical and Biblical Understanding of Dating and Courtship

Courtship and dating are some of the least discussed topics in the church. Yet dating has caused the most havoc, destroyed countless lives, resulted in unwanted pregnancies and abortions, and even split churches apart.

Since most of the church doesn't teach on this subject, a vacuum exists resulting in our teenagers adopting the worldview of popular culture. This has led many church youth groups to become havens for dating and premarital sex.

I am attempting to give some biblical clarity on this all-

important subject for the sake of our local churches and for the sanctity and safety of the next generation who will soon have their own families. The following are guidelines that best fit young people but many of the principles still apply to older and more mature single adults looking for a mate.

Dating

I have taught each of my five children the difference between dating and courtship. Dating is an unbiblical method crafted by the world with no boundaries or ethics with the following assumed rules and values:

- Two people can mutually claim to be “boyfriend and girlfriend” if they are physically attracted to one another and (this is the litmus test) have a crush and claim each other for themselves in a special relationship.
- There are no boundaries or ethics in this type of relationship. Thus, what initially starts off as French kissing quickly accelerates to petting, fondling, and then full-blown sexual intimacy.
- Although they are committed to one another as “boyfriend and girlfriend” they most often end their relationship after several months when one “feels a crush” for someone else. Thus, the relationship ends with at least one of the individuals feeling devastated and wounded especially because of soul ties that were created from sexual intimacy.

Although the above three points are generalizations, they are true depictions of most cases regarding dating; its devastating results on the human soul cannot be fully measured! Even worse, the double-mindedness that results from numerous sexual encounters with various people carries into future relationships and even marriage. This is because of unhealthy soul ties that have been developed, increasing the chances one’s marriage will end in adultery and divorce, which drags down children and creates generational curses due to

family fragmentation.

It is amazing that most churches and youth groups do not speak about this in their discipleship processes! Every pastor should have church guidelines that include boundaries for how their youth groups should be conducted. Every youth pastor should be trained on the difference between the worldly concept of dating and the biblical concept of courtship.

Dating is revolutionized if the following guidelines are followed:

- Dating should only take place in the context of having an accompanying chaperone with young couples. Or, only group dating should be encouraged. Groups can go to a movie or have an outing, or go for dinner so that two people can sit together and get to know one another in the safety of other trusted believers.
- Dating should not be encouraged for anyone under a certain age. I would say at least 18 although others would say 16.
- Dating should not involve any physical contact. Even something as harmless as a hug can lead to petting, which will then lead to a sexual encounter.
- Youth groups should be taught that believers should not to commit themselves to anyone God hasn't clearly indicated will eventually be their spouse. This is the only way to avoid soul ties through sexual intimacy. Also, parents, pastors, or trusted mature people should all be part of the process of discerning the will of God to counter the blindness that comes when feeling in love.
- Youth should be taught to have greater criteria beyond physically attraction. They should be taught what to look for in a lifelong partner: someone who has God-given aspirations with their career, an education, the right concepts of family and God, the ability to handle money well, connected to a local church, etc.

- People should be taught to back off and not run to a person to whom they are attracted. This is to give themselves enough time to pray, seek counsel, and hear from God about the other person before they fall hopelessly in love and reach the point where their heart has already made a choice to be with the other person—whether it be the will of God or not!
- Youth should make chastity vows before they enter high school. With these vows they should pledge to their parents before God they will not give their bodies over unless they are married to the other person.

Courtship

Although the Bible does not lay out specifics regarding courtship, since some of the biblical marriages were arranged by families (for example, the Old Testament patriarch Isaac and his wife Rebecca were brought together supernaturally by God with the order of Abraham), when we piece together all the principles of Scripture we have a good plan for courtship.

Courtship based on the biblical model of love, romance, sacrifice, dignity, and covenant implies the following about how two people could begin a process that may eventually lead to marriage:

Pre-Courtship Stage

A person should not even begin to look for a mate unless they are adequately prepared for the responsibilities of marriage and family, and are themselves emotionally healthy and spiritually mature (When two emotionally needy people get together in marriage it is usually a disaster).

Go on group dates to get to know the other person or work with them in some meaningful innocuous way. This will enable the development of a deep friendship to help discern the will of God before beginning the process of committing to each other more formally.

Both parties should back off, receive counsel, and pray to hear from God with other mature leaders and/or parents before allowing their hearts to be pulled towards each other romantically. Part of discerning the will of God is judging whether or not the other person meets the biblical criteria and qualifications of being a good mate, being able to raise children, and being a family leader.

Attraction should never be only physical. Based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we should be attracted to another person in three areas: physically, emotionally, and intellectually & spiritually (this includes personality). That is to say, a person needs to meet the criteria in each of these three areas. For example, it is a huge mistake to marry a person because they are strong spiritually when not attracted to them physically. Or, it is a mistake to marry a person for their personality when their spiritual life is a mess, etc.

Courtship Stage

Two people who have confirmed it is the will of God for them to be together should begin a process of spending time together. They should make a covenant together before God involving strict guidelines for not having physical contact or being alone where they can fall into sexual sin, and walking in the light and having open communication with one another.

This process should involve marital counseling conducted by older, successful married couples with spiritual depth and experience in raising strong families.

At some point, the man should formally ask the woman's father, parent, or relevant guardian for permission to marry the woman before he officially proposes to her.

Both families should get to know each other since marriage also unites two families, not just two people.

Money should be set aside during the engagement, and jobs and education should be already secured. This is so the focus of

the first few years of marriage is on building the relationship rather than on the distractions that come from financial stress, education, and other things that can destroy a relationship. (Although many make a good case for people to get married young so they can mature emotionally together) Going into debt and spending a lot of money on the wedding ceremony is not advised.

Monies should be channeled for life together more than on the one-time wedding ceremony. If you don't have the money, be simple and modest with excellence on your wedding day. Don't overdo it and go into huge debt! Invest in your marriage, not in your wedding day!

Practical and Biblical Understanding of Courtship

Courtship and dating are some of the least discussed topics in the church. Yet dating has caused the most havoc, destroyed countless lives, resulted in unwanted pregnancies and abortions, and even split churches apart. Since most of the church doesn't teach on this subject, a vacuum exists resulting in our teenagers adopting the worldview of popular culture. This has led many church youth groups to become havens for dating and premarital sex.

During the courtship Bible studies should be done together on the role of husbands and wives, and the purpose of children (Genesis 1:28). The book of Proverbs should be studied frequently together for practical wisdom and prudence in relationships and business.

Couples should especially study biblical love as found in 1 Corinthians 13 and understand that it is the commitment that arises out of covenant that will sustain their marriage—not merely the feeling of love. (For example, someone may wake up without those strong feeling of romance and be deceived into thinking they are no longer “in love” with their mate. This gives an excuse to begin another search for their true “soul mate” to experience romance again!) All couples must

understand the difference between romantic feelings/the world's definition of love and the biblical definition of love which is based on action, commitment, and sacrifice.

During courtship, much prayer should be offered for wisdom, favor, and understanding.

Mentor couples should be secured both during the courtship stage and after the marriage takes place. Mentor couples are experienced married couples who take younger couples under their wings, coaching them through personal issues that will eventually come up.

The courtship should last as long as necessary to work out all the kinks in the relationship. No date for the wedding should be set until numerous marital empowerment sessions and counseling sessions are conducted (we do eight sessions in our church called Marriage Builders), and a test from Marriage Savers is taken (). This will further insure the will of God is known and there is compatibility between the two people. (Regarding the Marriage Savers test, 25 percent of engaged couples that take the test break up. They realize they don't have enough compatibility to make a marriage work.)

No doubt, some reading this will scoff at my old-fashioned approach. But after 30 plus years of marriage, and having five biological children and hundreds of spiritual children over the past 34 years of full-time church ministry, the aforementioned principles come out of watching many relationships succeed and many fall apart.

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Why We Should Stop Trying to 'Win' the Gay Argument

The message can't be any clearer than in John 3:3: "John 3:3 – "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

If indeed the Bible is the true, infallible Word of God—and it is—then one must believe upon and call upon the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. Pastor Jack Hayford says that "being newborn, or "born again," means that your inner spirit has been brought into a new relationship with God through the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ."

If we believe that the Bible is without error—and it is—there is *no* denying that; *nobody* can refute that. But consider this: Is it necessary for believers, or "so-called believers," to shove that down the throats of non-believers and those drowning in sin? Isn't there a better way—a more compassionate way to reach the lost WITHOUT compromising the truth of the gospel?

Certainly there must be. Whether it be the deceived homosexual, the atheist, the Jew or the Muslim, believers in Jesus Christ MUST find a way to communicate the message of the Truth without condemnation. With the direction our society and our world is headed, there doesn't seem to be a lot of that going around. We *must* make them *want* to have what Jesus wants for them. I Timothy 2:3-4 says, "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."

That includes the woman from John 8 who was caught in

adultery. The Pharisees and scribes brought this woman to Jesus, saying that the law commanded her to be stoned for her sin. They asked Jesus what he would do.

“If you look at Jesus and boiled it down to theological position, you might say that this lined up pretty well with those of the Pharisees,” says Adam Barr, the co-author of *Compassion Without Compromise: How the Gospel Frees Us to Love Our Gay Friends Without Losing the Truth*. “He didn’t disagree with the people’s opinions about her sin. What he took them to task with is their absolute lack of compassion, their spiritual blindness to their own need for grace. We’re not political activists and we’re not moral philosophers. First and foremost, we are people of the gospel. For believers to have a real voice of real world people, we have to begin with the gospel. It’s about guilt, grace and gratitude.”

Jesus’ answer about the woman caught in adultery? He said, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” (John 8:7, MEV). When the angry mob had laid down their stones and walked away, Jesus asked her, “Woman, where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you? ... Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” (John 8:10, 12, MEV).

Jesus didn’t condemn the woman, but neither did he ignore or condone her sin. He told her to leave her life of sin. Jesus stands ready to forgive any sin in your life, but confession and repentance mean a change of heart. With God’s help, we can accept Christ’s forgiveness and stop our wrongdoing. We need to recognize our own sinful nature and look for ways to help others rather than hurt them.

It’s God’s role to judge, not ours. It’s our role to show forgiveness and to share the gospel with compassion. If you have done that—if you have shown them kindness without compromise and continue to pray for them—then you have done what God asks. When you have done your job, then allow the Holy Spirit to do its job, and that’s to convict the person’s

heart of his or her sin.

If they continue in their sin without repentance, then that situation is between themselves and God, and they will have to answer for it. As will we all.

A *Charisma* reader recently said it well: “We need to tell people the truth of God’s Word, and the Holy Spirit will do His work to convict them of their sin, leading them to repentance.”

Are we taking the log out of our own eye, or are we simply pointing fingers? Let’s be clear: There is a difference between speaking the truth in love and pointing the finger of scorn.

“If so-called Christians are doing that, I would remind them of the grace that Jesus has shown them,” said Ron Citlau, a pastor in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and a former member of the gay community who also co-authored *Compassion Without Compromise*. “They should honestly reflect upon the sins that they are ashamed of—or that they’re not ashamed of—that nobody knows about. God is gracious to everyone. Don’t these people deserve the same grace as you?”

Great point. Pretty simple, isn’t it?

So what can we do to show compassion without compromising the truth of God’s Word? Citlau says we, as believers, need to stop being so angry and defensive, reactions that are sure to repel those who might be willing to listen to the truth.

“One of the first things we can do is to stop worrying about being right in the sense of winning an argument,” Citlau says. “What we need to be concerned about in the cultural debate is being winsome in the telling of the story of the gospel of Jesus to anyone who wants it. We have to be in the public debate, but we really need to love the people whom we are discussing the subject with. We need to embody the kindness

and gentleness that Jesus did, but in a confident manner. Jesus said to love your enemies, didn't he?"

For part one of this two-part series, [click here](#).

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'You Can Trust My Basket'

Early in ministry, I came to a crossroads where I had to decide to go in one direction or another. I essentially had to choose between a situation that offered security, financially and otherwise, and following the call of God with all its risks and unknowns.

I had an inward conviction that I had to give myself fully to one or the other, but I didn't want to let go of either option. In prayer I said, "Lord, I don't want to be foolish and put all of my eggs in one basket." Then I heard the Lord speak. He said, "You can trust My basket." I have seen this to be true. God's basket is the best one; it is fully reliable and never breaks.

When Hernán Cortés, the famous Spanish explorer, arrived in Mexico's harbor of Veracruz in 1519, he faced overwhelming odds. Before him lay the mighty Aztec Empire with its vast armies. But, Cortés had only about six hundred men with him. They were far from home in a strange land; all possible odds were stacked hopelessly against them.

Cortés knew his men would always have one eye on the ships, longing for home. He knew that in the back of their minds they would always be considering the highly attractive alternative

of retreat. He knew that if these men were divided in heart or mind, the mission would surely fail.

So Cortés did something unthinkable. He ordered all eleven ships in their fleet to be burned. When the men stood on the shore and watched their only escape route going up in flames, it was a defining moment. There was no longer any possibility of turning back. They would either conquer or die. This consummate and unmitigated commitment unlocked unbelievable potential that gave them the power to succeed where all those before them had failed.

James 1:8 says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." You will never really succeed at anything if you are halfway in and halfway out. If God has called you, it is not necessary to have a "backup plan." You don't need to hedge your bets. You don't need to hold some of your eggs back "just in case." Cast out the unbelief, put all your eggs in God's basket, burn your ships, and give yourself to Him and His plan, body, soul, and spirit.

When you are 100 percent committed and there is no turning back, you will break into a level of effectiveness and power that you've never experienced before. You will succeed where others have failed. You will overcome in the face of overwhelming odds.

Mountains will move for you, and nothing will be impossible for you.

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.*

How to Have Healthy Conversations With Your Spouse

Last month, I blogged about how to better communicate with and listen to a spouse that has a very different communication style. But there's another aspect of communication that might make or break the health of a relationship between two people.

Healthy communication exists best when spouses are both developing the skill of an assertive communication style. [Tweet This]

Communication experts generally agree that we all gravitate towards one of four communication styles when we interact with another person:

1. Passive communication: This spouse tends to clam up, withdraw, and do all they can to avoid any confrontation. This can often lead to stress, anger, resentment, and bitterness in the passive person. For example, if finances are getting tight and stressful, the passive person will likely avoid the subject, change the subject, or overlook the subject, even when they see that a financial disaster is approaching.

2. Aggressive communication: This spouse tends to attack, control, and provoke others. This tends to raise everyone's stress levels, creating an atmosphere of fear and confrontation that seems, over time, to be insurmountable. And if unchecked, the aggressive person can become dangerous and destructive. In our earlier example, the aggressive spouse would see the financial stress and lash out at the family,

blaming others, creating fear of financial ruin.

3. Passive-aggressive communication: This spouse tends to turn agitation, anger, and frustration into a more confusing reaction by dealing with it very indirectly. Often the passive-aggressive person will respond with more subtlety or hints, while acting like nothing is wrong. They will pretend not to notice how something they did was troubling or pretend that any offense they've caused is more due to someone else's problem than theirs. Their real feelings will be masked by conflicting attitudes and actions.

Continuing the example of the financial problems, the passive-aggressive spouse, instead of addressing bad spending habits or overdue bills directly, would drop hints of frustration or unexpected snarky comments about purchases or payments, without being direct about what needs to be done to improve the situation.

4. Assertive communication: This spouse achieves a much healthier result than the others by starting with a clear understanding of what they feel, what they think, and what they want. The assertive person deals directly, honestly, and most importantly, *respectfully* with others about what they are thinking and feeling. To finish our example, the assertive spouse would identify the real financial issue, and directly and honestly address the issue, without being angry or demeaning or confusing to the other spouse. They would accept responsibility for any part they played and would then offer some clear solutions and say something like, "We need to make some changes, and we need to work together to get through this. Here is what I would suggest..." would be a typical type of response from a healthy, assertive person.

For much of my life, I was a more aggressive communicator, and it was not always appreciated by others, especially my wife, Susan. But I've worked hard over the years to be more of an assertive communicator, and it really is a much better form of

communication and Susan appreciates it so much more!

Which type of communicator are you? How about your spouse? Please share in the comments section below.

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

8 Ways to Survive Early Allergy Season

For millions of Americans who suffered through record cold and snow during the brutal winter of 2014-15, spring can't come early enough. But for many of the 40 million in the U.S. with seasonal allergies, the misery index is already rising—with an early spring allergy season shaping up in some regions of the U.S.

On the West Coast and Southwestern United States, allergists are now seeing high levels of pollen—providing an early glimpse of things to come for the rest of the nation in the weeks ahead. Health experts are predicting that unusual drought conditions in some regions and high levels of rainfall and snowmelt in others will produce a bumper crop of pollinating trees and grasses, as well as mold growth.

But specialists also note the severity of allergy season depends not only on total pollen counts, but also on temperatures, precipitation, and the amounts and varieties of flowering plants in certain areas that produce allergic reactions.

“People focus on the highs and lows of pollen counts,” says

allergist James Sublett, M.D., president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. “What they don’t realize is that a high total pollen count doesn’t always mean you will have allergy symptoms.

“The pollen from the plant you are allergic to may not be high. The key is to know what you’re allergic to, and how to treat your particular symptoms.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 8 percent of Americans suffer from seasonal allergies that cause stuffy and runny noses, watery and itchy eyes, sneezing, and wheezing. Allergies are also the sixth-leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S. with an annual cost in excess of \$18 billion, the ACAAI estimates.

But there are things you can do to keep your spring allergy symptoms under control. Among them

1. Keep allergens outdoors. Don’t track pollen and other allergens indoors. Make sure to change clothes after being outdoors, tap your shoes outside your house to knock off any pollen, and wash your hair before getting in bed.

2. Keep your home clean. Allergens are often present on doormats, carpets, furniture, and curtains. Vacuum your house regularly to remove irritants, keep windows closed, run your air conditioning (if you have it), and check bathrooms and kitchens for mold growth, which can exacerbate allergies.

3. Stay indoors during peak hours. Pollen and allergen concentrations tend to peak early in the morning and on dry, hot, and windy days. Limit the time you spend outdoors during these hours so you are outside when it is cooler, less windy, and later in the day.

4. Use a mask. An air-filtering mask help prevent allergic reactions. Some higher-end masks—equipped HEPA filters—can be as effective as over-the-counter remedies.

5. Take antihistamines. Antihistamines can reduce allergic reactions. Among them: Allegra, Benedryl, Dimetane, Claritin, Alavert, Tavist, Chlor-Trimeton, and Zyrtec. Note that taking medicines for spring allergies can cause drowsiness and dry mouth. And if you start taking medicine before the worst symptoms hit, the severity of your reactions may be lessened.

6. Avoid certain fruits and vegetables. If you suffer from seasonal allergies, you may also be more likely to have allergic reactions to certain types of fruits, vegetables, and nuts. For instance, if you are allergic to birch or alder trees, you might have strong reactions to apples, cherries or even celery, apples, or cherries. If you have grass allergies, then tomatoes, potatoes, and peaches may cause you irritation.

7. Allergy shots. Immunotherapy injections can help, if symptoms continue for many months of the year, by boosting the immune system to become more resistant to specific allergens and lessen symptoms. Immunotherapy involves receiving regular injections given in increasing doses. Someone who begins allergy shots in January will typically experience a significant reduction, or elimination, of symptoms by April. Most patients need them once every month or so in the first few years of receiving shots, but some people may eventually be able to discontinue them.

8. New immunotherapy tablets. The Food and Drug Administration approved this form of allergy treatment in 2014. Starting at least three months before allergy season begins, patients dissolve a tablet under the tongue daily, and treatment can continue for as long as three years. Only two allergens (grass and ragweed pollens) can now be treated with this method, but it may be a good option for patients with grass pollen allergy not controlled with medications.

Allergists also point out that certain regions of the U.S. are worse than others, when it comes to allergens. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America has compiled a "Spring Allergy

Capitals” report card that has identified the 100 U.S. cities with the right mix of factors to be considered the worst places for allergy sufferers.

Louisville ranked number one on the AAFA’s most recent report, followed by Dallas, Richmond, and Birmingham. The rankings are based on the metropolitan area’s pollen score, which reflects recorded pollen/mold spore levels, the duration of the peak spring season, the percentage of people in the area who are affected by those pollens, and allergy medicine use.

Even cities that rank low on the AAFA report—such as Colorado Springs, which placed last at 100—are considered bad for allergies. The point of the ranking, AAFA officials say, is to let allergy sufferers know that they need to take extra precautions if they live in, or are visiting, one of the nation’s “Spring Allergy Capitals.”

For the original article, visit .

Confession: My Child Is Failing to Meet My Expectations

I’ve always known our daughter was athletic and very fast. I can remember her beating boys in races after soccer practices and the boys going home devastated that a girl beat them.

This year, we finally got to put that speed and athleticism to the test when she joined the city’s premier track club.

We couldn’t have been more proud and excited when her first season ended. Two of the highlights were a bronze medal at a

national meet and qualifying for the Junior Olympics in two events. One of those individual events she had just begun running several weeks prior. We were excited about the winter track season and looking forward to the 2015 spring and summer season.

That's when all of our excitement drastically dropped. Our daughter decided she didn't want to run track this winter. I couldn't believe that she may be giving up something she seemed to be so naturally good at and also seemed to enjoy.

She had met her expectations, but not mine. When you hear yourself saying, "My child is failing to meet my expectations," here are some ways to handle it:

1. Don't put your dreams on your child. Many parents are guilty of trying to live out their own dreams through their children. Your children may look like you, sound like you and even act like you, but they are not you. They have their own likes and dislikes, dreams, goals and ideals in life. Let them be free to choose and experience those with your guidance.

2. Seek to understand your child. Maybe your child quit a sport, an activity or isn't the straight A student you envisioned. Instead of coming down on them or counting them out, seek to understand why they have chosen what they've chosen. Figure out why they are performing the way they are performing and what they are thinking. Be OK if their thought process isn't just like yours. Finding the why behind their decisions can help lead to solutions.

3. Encourage your child. When they mess up, pick them up. When they make a bad choice, be there to help them learn from it, instead of condemning them. When they go in the complete opposite direction you had hoped or expected, be there on the other side when they return.

It's been hard on me as I see my daughter with so much potential in track. I want the best for her, and I think this

is a great opportunity. It could open the door for bigger things in and out of track. At the end of the day, I want to be there encouraging her to be the best she can be in any area.

Sound Off: How do you handle it when your child is failing to meet your expectations?

Huddle up with your kids and ask them what they want to accomplish this year.

Related Resource: [6 Ways to Manage Your Kids' Big Dreams](#)

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Are Dietary Supplements Worth the Money?

When Dr. Moyad was 22, he researched, wrote and published his first medical paper on the effects of cottonseed oil on health. Shortly thereafter, he was one of the primary investigators of the L-tryptophan dietary supplement debacle in Florida where a huge batch of tainted supplements caused at least 37 deaths and 1,500 permanent disabilities.

As he interviewed patients, Dr. Moyad determined it was a problem with the manufacturer and impurities produced at the plant got into the supplements. In the process of working on the medical paper, Dr. Moyad spent years doing extensive research on supplements.

After his cousin died from breast cancer at the age of 38, Dr. Moyad went on a speaking tour to encourage people to contact their representative in Washington, D.C., to increase funding for cancer research. During this tour, cancer patients approached Dr. Moyad about their diets and supplements. He answered all of their questions and ended his trip by gathering signatures to Senators at the Capitol. After that, Dr. Moyad decided to make a career out of specializing in dietary supplements.

After he set up a consulting practice at the University of Michigan Medical Center in the department of urology, he began conducting research on diet and supplement-related research on many types of cancers. One day, Dr. Moyad was consulting with a patient named Phil Jenkins. Phil had cancer and Dr. Moyad gave him diet and supplement advice for his condition.

Phil asked why no doctors were working full-time in this area. Dr. Moyad said that the medical system was not set up to educate or train doctors in this category. Dr. Moyad jokingly said, "If you contributed \$1.5 million to a supplement endowment, then I could devote my life to studying dietary supplements and wouldn't have to charge people for my advice." A few days later, Phil wrote a check for \$1.5 million.

Now, more than 20 years later, Dr. Moyad says the endowment has grown substantially because of other donors. Today, Dr. Moyad spends real time with patients, often in the comfort of their own homes, in addition to teaching, conducting research, lecturing to various groups and consulting with supplement and pharmaceutical companies to help them do a better job.

"Some people have said that I may be the top expert in the world right now in this area," says Dr. Moyad. "But I would argue that I am just a trailblazer, clearing the way for other doctors and health care professionals to specialize in this growing field."

Navigating the Supplement World

Dr. Moyad believes the days of dabbling in the world of supplements are over. There is a myriad of information and much of it is confusing.

“If a so-called ‘expert’ is only dabbling part-time in this area but dishing out information to you, he is being reckless, especially since so many supplements are the equivalent of drugs,” says Dr. Moyad. Many prescription drugs are derived from natural sources.

Cholesterol-lowering statins originally came from a fungus/yeast; metformin, used in diabetes, originates from the French lilac; and aspirin was created from willow bark. If a drug is more effective in treating an ailment than a supplement, Dr. Moyad has no problem saying so.

Dr. Moyad is not a pill-pusher.

“I am a healthy-lifestyle advocate,” he says. He believes that lifestyle plays a huge role in being healthy.

“Obesity has overtaken smoking as the primary preventable cause of illness and premature death,” says Dr. Moyad. “Obesity is increasing diseases in every category. People don’t realize that part of the solution is in them.”

For example, we can reduce the chances of getting male/female aggressive forms of cancers by exercising and losing weight. “The biggest killer of testosterone is weight gain,” says Dr. Moyad.

There is no need for taking supplements for low testosterone. He says there are serious breakthroughs in medical dietary studies of Vitamin E and Alzheimer’s.

“Two thousand IU slows nerve damage in patients,” says Dr. Moyad. “It reduced caregiver time by two hours a day.” Vitamin E was used along with medication in the studies. “It’s not a

cure but we have something positive and we don't get many things positive for Alzheimer's."

Recent interest in the use of coconut oil to prevent Alzheimer's is due to the MCT or medium chain triglycerides found in coconut oil that the body and brain use for fuel.

"Coconut oil is high in lauric acid which may be beneficial," says Dr. Moyad. "The catch is that these fats may raise bad cholesterol in humans but at the same time we know they also raise good cholesterol, which is unique. I am excited about coconut oil, or the fats in them, because the brain is loaded with fat, especially at birth."

Coconut oil is great for people who watch their health, but Dr. Moyad says there are no credible clinical trials as of now.