

# How to Get on God's Diet Plan

Patients often ask me if God wants humans to be vegetarians. The answer is yes and no. Originally, vegetarianism was His design for all people and animals (see Gen. 1:29-30). That plan changed when the Lord said to Noah: "'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs'" (9:3). The only exception was this was: "'But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood'" (v. 4).

But in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, the Lord gave instructions through Moses about how to eat healthily. He said which animals, birds and fish to eat. For example, the Israelites were allowed to eat only animals that chewed cud and had split hoofs, such as cows, sheep and goats.

The Jews lived under God's dietary rules for centuries, and their bodies were strong and disease-resistant. The Bible says none were feeble among all 2 million Jews in the wilderness (see Ps. 105:37).

Jesus abided by these same rules, never eating pork, shellfish, catfish or other restricted foods. He was certainly not a vegetarian, but as an observant Jew He would have followed the dietary laws God gave to Moses.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, the dietary rules radically changed. People are no longer under the law but under grace. Paul made this clear when he wrote to Timothy: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

The apostles and elders gave recommendations about not eating food that has been sacrificed to idols, or eating blood or the meat of animals that have been strangled (see Acts 15:28-29). But they did not insist that the Jews follow the former

dietary laws.

As a Christian, you are free to eat anything you want. Your diet will not keep you from heaven—but if you continually eat unhealthy foods, you will get there much sooner. As Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful” (1 Cor. 6:12). You must choose a diet that is good for you.

If God is the same yesterday, today and forever, as Hebrews 13:8 says, then what is the wisest diet for us to follow? I believe God’s initial plan for vegetarianism should carry a lot of weight with us. I don’t promote strict vegetarianism—and neither does God. After all, He told Peter, “‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat’” when Peter had a vision of various animals and birds (Acts 10:13). But I do note that vegetarians live longer and may have lower incidences of heart disease and cancer.

The Bible gives a real-life example of vegetarianism’s benefits in the story of Daniel. Daniel and three other Jewish youths in the king’s palace in Babylon were to be nourished for three years on the king’s rich food and wine. But Daniel asked if they could eat vegetables, grains and legumes instead. At the end of 10 days, they looked better and healthier than all the other youths.

That’s a pretty good testimony for eating meat-free. But I am not advocating cutting meat out entirely. When people command you to abstain from certain meats, realize that every creature of God is good, and you can have it as long as you bless it (see 1 Tim. 4:1-4).

The key is to practice balance and moderation, especially when eating meats. Also realize that this Scripture refers to foods God created. The foods that are causing disease and killing Americans are processed foods, fast foods, and foods high in sugar and toxic man-made fats and oils. Eating the right foods

makes you physically healthy and wise. Eat the wrong foods, and you open the door to degeneration, disease and an early death.

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## **10 Characteristics of a Man of Integrity**

One of the best definitions of character we've ever heard goes something like this: "Character is what you do when no one else is looking."

This is one reason golf is such a great life-lesson game. It's the only professional sport where the participants call penalties on themselves.

But men of integrity value what is honest, true, noble, trustworthy, kind and right ahead of personal gain. Once integrated into our foundational operating system, integrity ceases to be optional or "add on" but instead becomes a way of life.

Here are some suggestions that will help once we decide to make integrity a foundational value:

**1. Root yourself in a moral foundation.** It's been said that everyone has a god; the question is only "What god do we choose?" But many of us fail to even address the issue. Once

considered, this question can give us a firm place to anchor.

**2. Look for the positive.** Load your consciousness in a positive direction by scanning the news for examples of integrity. Then talk about those with friends and family rather than the latest scandal. Make endorsing integrity a stronger value in your life than criticism and scorn.

**3. Resist the temptation to compartmentalize your life.** Too many of us are different people in different places. Determine to be a man of integrity; then practice at home, at work, at play—wherever you are.

**4. Determine to live for others ahead of yourself.** The root enemy of integrity is selfishness. The “Golden Rule” requires treating others the way we would like to be treated. It is impossible to follow the Golden Rule without a boost to personal integrity.

**5. Participate in an active accountability group.** There’s a great story about the great leader Moses when his friends Aaron and Hur stood with him to hold his arms up high until the battle was won. We all need friends to hold our arms up, to help keep us strong.

**6. Partner with a friend where you need to make progress.** Take accountability to the next level by asking another man to hold your feet to the fire where necessary. This can be a mutual arrangement. We know a man who asks his friend to call several times a week and ask point-blank if he’s been looking at porn. The promise of a pointed question can help any area of weakness.

**7. Be in the habit of sharing everything with your wife.** When we don’t keep any secrets from our spouse, it tends to have an impact on who we are.

**8. Practice the habit of imagining the presence of someone whose opinion you value.** What if my father was present at this

business meeting? I wonder how Grandpa would enjoy being part of this foursome? Would I tell this joke in the presence of my wife? How would my kids feel if they listened in on this conversation?

**9. Hold your children accountable.** It's cliché to say that "to teach is to learn." But the truth is, every lesson we bring to our children is something we need to hear too.

**10. Practice having a "principle of the week."** Elaborate the teaching equation to highlight a "principle of the week" at home. Have a week devoted to conversations about honesty, another week highlighting trust, then a week where everyone in the family pledges one act of selflessness per day and then shares over dinner.

**All Pro Dad** is Family First's innovative and unique program for every father. Their aim is to interlock the hearts of the fathers with their children and, as a byproduct, the hearts of the children with their dads. At , dads in any stage of fatherhood can find helpful resources to aid in their parenting. Resources include daily emails, blogs, Top 10 lists, articles, printable tools, videos and eBooks. From , fathers can join the highly engaged All Pro Dad social media communities on **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube** and **Instagram**.

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## **How to Lead A Man (or Woman) to Christ**

Today, millions of men in America woke up ready to hear a credible explanation of how Christian faith could change their futile lives. Most of these men will go to bed tonight without getting one.

Here are five steps you can take to discipline yourself to be a soul winner:

- 1. Pray for men.** Ask God to put “prepared” men on your heart.
- 2. Make an appointment.** Take the men God puts on your heart to breakfast, lunch, or out for a cup of coffee.
- 3. Listen.** Ask a man, “Where are you on your spiritual pilgrimage?” I’ve only had one man out of thousands I’ve asked in over 30 years who wasn’t interested in talking about it.
- 4. Share your testimony.**
- 5. Explain how to receive Christ.**

Two steps need more ink. First, you should be able to give him the testimony of how you became a Christian. Second, you should be able to show him God’s plan of salvation in the Bible.

### **How To Give Your Testimony**

The example of your changed life will (usually) do more to “draw” a man toward Jesus than anything else. My apologetics professor in seminary said, “Despite all the intellectual arguments for the existence of God, still the most powerful argument of all is a changed life.” However, it is not enough for men to see you are different—they need to know why. For that, you will have to speak.

Once you’ve listened and sense a man (or woman) knows you are on their side, give him your testimony. Your own story is 100 times more powerful than telling him the “theology” of Christianity alone. Be prepared to do this in not more than 10 minutes, but also in three minutes if the time is short. In equal time segments tell him three things:

- **Before:** What was your life like before you embraced Jesus? Empty, confused, lonely, disillusioned, futile, lacking significance, without purpose or meaning, successful but still not happy? As much as possible, relate your story to what you know about his story.

- **How:** How did you come to profess faith in Jesus? Where? Who showed you the way? Why did you respond? Be sure to mention conviction of your sins, hunger for truth, understanding who Christ is, repentance, and faith in Jesus.
- **After:** What has Christ done in your life since? Pick areas that have changed which relate to his struggles.

**A challenge:** If you want to get serious about sharing Christ with men (or already are), don't shoot from the hip. Take a couple of hours and write out, time, practice, and memorize a three-minute testimony.

Pick words that sparkle and emote. Mark Twain said, "A powerful agent is the right word."

*The preceding is an excerpt from **Patrick Morley's** book, A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines. Morley is the chairman and co-CEO of Man in the Mirror Ministries. For the original article, visit .*

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## 10 Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

If you are one of the growing number of people with sleep problems, here are 10 good sleep habits to get into:

1. Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day. The body likes predictability.
2. Turn off the computer two hours before bedtime, and don't watch TV in bed.
3. If you suspect money or relationship issues are keeping you

up at night, consider counseling or confiding in your pastor to help alleviate stress.

4. Use a book, not a tablet, for reading. Studies show that backlit screens, like those on iPad and other tablets, can disrupt your natural body clock.

5. Don't eat or drink anything that contains caffeine after noon. This includes coffee, of course, but other drinks and foods can contain this stimulant as well, including tea, chocolate, energy drinks and some sodas.

6. Darken the room completely.

7. Don't go to sleep on a full stomach.

8. Get regular exercise; it promotes sleep.

9. Avoid alcohol at night. Even if you think it helps you get to sleep, drinking alcohol increases the odds of awakening.

10. Follow a nighttime ritual. Brush and floss your teeth, turn down the bed, take a hot bath or listen to relaxing music. Establish a pleasurable routine and stick to it.

Even though you may never have thought about the necessity of getting a full night's sleep, when it comes to protecting your health, the evidence is clear that fulfilling your daily sleep requirement is as important as the other steps you take to protect your heart. So if you are still having sleep problems, don't cover them up with a sleeping pill. Get to the root of the problem and get the good night's sleep you deserve.

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*physician," Dr. Crandall has been heralded for his values and message of hope to all his heart patients.*

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **Fast-Growing Hispanic Evangelical Population Steps Up Support for Israel**

Against the backdrop of growing threats facing Israel at home and abroad, one of the fastest-growing ethnoreligious segments in the U.S. is stepping up its support for the Jewish state.

At the forefront of the interests of America's Hispanic Evangelical Christian population is the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC)/Conela. Claiming to represent more than 100 million Hispanic evangelicals in the U.S., NHCLC/Conela is now beginning to wield its considerable influence for the purpose of standing up for Israel.

NHCLC—which earlier merged with Conela, a Latin American organization that serves more than 500,000 Latin churches across the world—states that its vision is to “exercise prophetic leadership by reconciling the vertical and horizontal planes of the Christian message, sanctification with service, conviction with compassion, the image of God with the habits of Christ, holiness and humility, John 3:16 and Matthew 25, and the prophetic with the practical.”

The organization adds that it is looking to “enrich the narrative of American Evangelicalism by replacing the media-exacerbated image of angry white evangelicals who oppose

everything to a convicted yet compassionate multi-ethnic kingdom-culture community committed to sharing truth with love.”

“We seek to combine the message of Rev. Bill Graham of salvation with that of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s march of prophetic activism,” Rev. Dr. Samuel Rodriguez, president of NHCLC/Conela, told .

“That being said, our commitment to the Jewish people and Israel is also without compromise.” he said.

According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, Hispanics are one of the fastest-growing segments of the Evangelical Christian population, with 16 percent of American Hispanics identifying as evangelical in 2013, up from 12 percent in 2010. Similar trends have developed in Latin America, where Protestants now make up 19 percent of the population, with 69 percent of them belonging to evangelical churches.

These “evangélicos” have an above-average enthusiasm for their faith. They display this fervor by attending church services, praying more and strongly adhering to moral teachings, according to Pew. This Hispanic evangelical surge has come at the expense of Roman Catholicism, which traditionally has been the faith of the vast majority of Hispanics and has historically shaped their outlook.

As the leader of one of the largest Hispanic organizations in the U.S., Rev. Rodriguez has spoken at the White House and frequently consults with federal legislators from both parties on such issues such as social justice, the Latino community and values.

Support for Israel has become a key aspect of the mission of many evangelical Christian organizations, as is the case for the evangelical movement as a whole. While Rodriguez said that most Hispanic evangelicals are “absolutely committed to Israel,” he is concerned about the surge in anti-Semitism in

the Latino world, especially among the younger generation.

While Latin America is home to many large and prosperous Jewish communities, most anti-Semitism in the region comes from the traditional sources based on prejudices inherited from Europe, especially from the Spanish Inquisition, as well as modern anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist rhetoric promoted by far-left elements like former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez.

Rodriguez said the mainstream media's portrayal of Israel is one of the main culprits behind opposition to Israel among the younger demographic, especially in light of the recent summer war in Gaza—which sparked upsurge in anti-Israel and anti-Semitic attacks around the world, including in Latin America.

“Many Latinos have in essence absorbed the mainstream media message that Israel is an aggressive, antagonistic force in the Middle East, where Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank are suffering at the hands of Israel,” said Rodriguez.

“Most Hispanics want to do justice and they want to align themselves with those who are marginalized and suffering. So they see the Palestinian community as suffering at the hands of the Israeli government,” he said.

In order to combat this, Rodriguez has formulated a two-pronged approach.

“My job is to convince young Latino people that supporting Israel actually works for the good of all in the Middle East,” he said. “First by affirming the nearly 150 million Latino evangelicals across the world in their commitment to Israel, then by elevating what we currently have in our community to teach about Israel to the wider Latino community.”

In order to spread this message, Rodriguez said it is important to “speak the truth about Israel” in order to counter the lies being spread about the Jewish state in the

mainstream media.

“Israel is the sole democracy in that part of the world and a safeguard for religious pluralism. ... When I go to Israel I meet with Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders. Israel is not persecuting Christians and Muslims. Israel is providing a space under democracy for religious pluralism to serve as an antidote against secular or even religious totalitarianism. Israel is not the problem, Israel is the solution,” he said.

NHCLC/Conela recently formed a partnership with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), one of the largest Christian Zionist organizations in the world. Since 1980, ICEJ has hosted the annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem to coincide with the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. This year, the event drew more than 5,000 Christians from 80 countries.

Rodriguez sees the partnership with ICEJ and the Feast of Tabernacles as a rallying point for Hispanic evangelicals to come to Israel every year and experience the country.

“The evangelical movement has experienced tremendous growth in the Latino world over recent decades and it is exciting to see their support and enthusiasm for Israel,” ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Juergen Buehler told .

“It is an indigenous expression of solidarity based on solid, biblical grounds, and we are thrilled that our annual Feast of Tabernacles will be a channel for these Hispanic Christians to convey their love and concern directly to the Israeli people,” added Buehler.

In light of the recent surge of Palestinian terrorism and rioting in Jerusalem and across Israel, Rodriguez said that Israel and Jews can count on the support of Hispanic Evangelicals.

“My message to Israel and the Jewish people is that there is a

Hispanic Christian community emerging that will not abandon Israel or the Jewish people," he said. "We will build a firewall against anti-Semitism, and we will do that with integrity and compassion."

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

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## Could You Be a Modern-Day Job?

We don't plan setbacks and that is exactly why they set us back so far emotionally. They are unwelcome, unexpected, and unmercifully longer than necessary.

The toughest part of weathering a setback is that you must emotionally reset to zero and start all over. Brutal.

Ironically, setbacks are the birthplaces of all comeback stories. Just like diamonds are best seen against black velvet, recoveries are best seen following our tragedies. Ask my wife about each of her three miscarriages which were each followed by the healthy births of Cara, Ryan and Jenna (our kids). Brutal losses followed by beautiful babies and magnificent maternal bonds.

Job is one of the most incredible, if not the greatest, 'setback to comeback' story of all time. Every man can relate to his story in way or the other. If you find yourself depleted, broken, lost, confused or angry with God right now, consider Job.

He had a wife. Children. Flocks. Friends. A home. He trusted and followed God. Despite living in a world of sin, he looked

upward, onward and was blessed. Job 'had it all.'

- "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. His possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and very many servants. This man was the greatest of all the people of the East" (Job 1:1-3).

Then, it was taken away—all of it. Heaped on top, Job suffered from painful open sores—or boils—from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet.

Can you imagine this? Everything Job had, he lost. He lost every loved one and every possession, and he had physical pain lopped on top.

What would you do?

Could you mount up a comeback amid such dire straights? Could you come from behind and score a touchdown with less than 30 seconds on the clock during the Super Bowl, while taped up, bruised and battered, facing the best defense in the NFL?

It's a heroic thought. But most men, even if they don't admit it, would melt.

Job didn't.

Job held onto God. He trusted God, no matter what. Sure, Job asked God for answers and wondered why he was tortured. God gave Job a lesson, then restored his life and doubled his previous holdings.

- "And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends, and also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. ... So the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a

thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand female donkeys. He had also seven sons and three daughters”(Job 42: 10, 12-13).

Every man knows exactly what he doesn't want to happen on his journey in life. But what happens when the exact things you never envisioned happening happen? Many men will surrender to the thought that suffering is a curse and use it as a pretext to abandon their faith.

Good thing Job didn't bail out early in his situation, because on the other side of his setback was the most epic comeback story of all time. At the time he could have never known that his struggle to trust God would be used by God to comfort and guide billions of believers in the centuries.

So when your setbacks come (and they will), seek God's purpose in it. Satan would have you believe it is a stumbling block. God wants you to know it is a stepping stone. Your day-by-day choices to believe and trust God are the makings of a comeback story that will define you, bless others and glorify God.

**Kenny Luck**, founder of Every Man Ministries, men's pastor at Saddleback Church and ChristianMingle advisory board member, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow [Kenny](#) and [Every Man Ministries](#) on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

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

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# Dads, Ask the Holy Spirit to Guard Your Tongue

It's a classic parenting situation that dads seem to run into quite often: Junior lets loose with a string of four-letter words that shocks everyone who hears it, especially his mom.

Well, every parent knows what he or she has to say in that situation, right? So Junior's mother asks him, "Where did you learn to talk like that?"

Dad, if you're nearby when that happens, my best advice is to get away—right away. Inevitably, Junior's eyes will turn to you. Maybe he'll even point at you. And then his mom will give you *that look*.

Okay, it isn't always us dads who are the offenders; our kids hear good and bad words from all kinds of different people. Maybe this is an unfair stereotype that's been attached to dads. Still, I want to ask, *Have you been there?*

Not long ago, *I was there*. My bride and I were being good grandparents, helping our daughter with an errand and having fun with her two children, our grandchildren. At one stop, I was helping to fasten the kids in their car seats. It was pretty routine until something unusual happened and my 4-year-old grandson responded by uttering a one-word, four-letter exclamation that stopped us all in our tracks. And he really got the most out of that word, stretching it out for at least a couple of seconds.

Now, to make it plain and not embarrass my family members too much, this was not an R-rated word, or even PG-13. Probably more like a PG word, but definitely one his parents do not want him to use.

My daughter stopped, looked at him very seriously, and asked

that question: "Where did you learn that?"

My grandson got a big grin on his face, looked right at *me*, and said, "From PeePaw." In case you didn't know, that's what my grandkids call me! I am PeePaw. And he was falsely accusing me of teaching him this forbidden word! And my own daughter gave me *that look*.

I suppose these situations are part of the never-ending teaching process that comes with being a father—and grandfather. And it was nothing earth-shattering in this case, but it was a strong reminder for me about the power of a father's modeling of character and integrity. How often do we hear a child let loose with some profanity, and then say, "I heard it from Daddy"? *Ouch*.

The point is that they're watching us all the time, *and we have to demonstrate only behavior we would be comfortable seeing in them*.

Maybe we should consider taking it a step further. I was telling a friend about that incident with my grandson, and he pointed out that while I don't use the word my grandson said, I do often use another word when I'm surprised or excited about something—not a cuss word, but it's also not that far from the word my grandson used. *Ouch*.

Maybe, with modeling, we need to avoid doing or saying things we don't want our children doing or saying, *as well as things they might confuse with the wrong behavior*. It's part of doing everything we can to train and shape them in a responsible way. In order to do this, we must pray and ask the Holy Spirit, every day and all day, to keep a guard on our tongues. The Holy Spirit is sensitive to coarse language, and will help us to keep it from coming out of our mouths if only we ask him to.

Also, there's an aspect of *grace* in our modeling. There are no perfect fathers, and none of us will ever be flawless role

models. It can be powerful modeling to go to a child and admit our mistakes and shortcomings, and admit that that we are works in progress but trying do give them our best.

*Have you ever had a similar experience? When did your child say, "I learned it from Daddy"? Please join the discussion below.*

### **Action Points for Dads on the Journey**

- Talk with your children to make sure they know which words are unacceptable in your household—and why.
- Ask your children's mother or another close friend how well you maintain your composure when tense or trying situations arise, and how you deal with anger.
- Do a personal character evaluation. *What parts of your life would you never want your kids to witness, or maybe you'd be devastated if you saw them acting the same way? Come up with a plan to positively address that area.*

**Carey Casey** is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization seeking to improve the lives of children and establish a positive fathering and family legacy that will impact future generations by inspiring and equipping fathers and father figures to be actively engaged in the life of every child.

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **Keep Testing Your Limits to Break Old Habits**

The Holy Spirit brought a powerful story to my mind about how memories of past failures and pain can limit your future.

Here's the story:

A man on a "behind the scenes" circus tour passed by the elephants. He was astonished to see these giant creatures held by a small rope on one leg. Knowing these animals possessed the strength to break free any time they wanted, he was curious as to why they didn't. He asked their trainer that question.

"We start when they are young, and much smaller than they are now," the trainer said. "We use the same-sized rope to hold them and at that age, it is strong enough to hold them. As they grow up, they become conditioned to believe they can't break free. And so they stop even trying."

How many of us go through life hanging onto a belief that we cannot do something, simply because we failed at it once before? Your past failures do not indicate your likelihood of success in the future. As you grow stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might, you *must* keep testing the limits of your old thinking and behavioral habits, such as overeating or eating junk food that keep you bound to being overweight.

Otherwise, you'll be like those mighty elephants bound with those little ropes. The first step to your freedom is to believe you *can* be free through renewing your mind with God's Word. And then you use God's strength to back away from the old habits and mindsets, keep backing away and keep backing away ... until the rope or stake gives way and you are free!

After the Holy Spirit brought this story to my mind, I shouted "Keep testing your limits!" Ephesians 3:20 says "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,"

The elephant stays bound because the power within him is not put to use. Today, put the power within you to use. Yield to the Holy Spirit in your daily decisions. Keep growing stronger in the Lord—through prayer, praise, worship and study of God's

Word. Don't give up until you are free of the things that bind you!

Be blessed in health, healing and wholeness.

*Note: Are you tired of losing weight—only to gain back the weight you lost, plus more? You are not alone! As someone once said, the definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over, but expecting different results. It's time to close the door on weight-loss frustration and self-sabotage. Now the **Take Back Your Temple** e-book bundle will show you simple ways to transform your mind so you can transform your body. Start enjoying confidence of feeling good in your body, experiencing peace with food and celebrating the joy of living with purpose every day.*

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **9 Things Wives Should Never Say to Their Husbands**

A few years ago, I posted a list of 10 Things Husbands Want to Hear from Their Wives, and it was so popular that we followed that up last year with another post of 10 More Things Husbands Want to Hear from Their Wives.

And since I recently shared with the men the 9 Things You Should Never Say to Your Wife, I thought it might now be good to share with you ladies the things a wife should never say to her husband. I went to All Pro Dad Facebook and asked the men that follow us to tell us what one thing they do not want to hear from their wives. Here are the nine things you should never say to your husband based on some of the top responses

with a few that I've added:

**1. "I don't respect you."** Spend enough time in marriage and most couples will realize that men tend to desire and to need respect above many other needs. It's is a devastating blow when a wife tells her husband that she doesn't respect him. These words will cause wounds that will require a lot of work to heal.

**2. "Why are you doing that?"** A wife can also disrespect a man when she always questions his judgment. A man needs his woman to value and trust his opinions and decisions, even if they prove to be wrong sometimes. That means not constantly questioning his knowledge by saying, "Why do you say that?" or challenging his decisions by asking, "Why don't you just stop and get directions?"

**3. "Can't you do anything right?"** A man wants his wife to believe in him and his abilities. A man doesn't want to hear "Can't you do anything right?" or words like "You're not a handyman; I'll call the plumber" or "Sports isn't your thing. I'll ask John to teach him how to throw the football." A guy doesn't want to be shot down before he even gives it a chance.

**4. "I told you so."** Nobody likes to be reminded when they did something wrong, but this phrase adds a new twist to that relationship dagger. It communicates not only that the husband was wrong about something but seemingly declares just how right she is about something. It's a belittling and demeaning phrase which may serve to make the wife feel better about herself and her own judgment, but it pulls down her husband in the process.

**5. "We need to talk."** As necessary as this phrase may be to convey the urgency of a topic, it's usually seen as a signal that either the husband has done something wrong or something really serious has happened. It's not the best way to broach a serious subject. It also can come across as demeaning. Perhaps

a better way to accomplish this is to put it in the form of a question like “Can we talk sometime tonight about something important?” or “When would be a good time today for us to catch up on some things?”

**6. “I just don’t love you anymore. I want a divorce.”** What words can wound more than these? And yet so often people think “love” is just an emotion. Love is a choice, not just an emotion. The “D” word should never be used in marriage. Once these words are spoken, they cannot be taken back. With help, a couple can heal this kind of hurt, but why go there in the first place?

**7. Forget it ... I’ll just do it myself.”** When a wife says this to a husband, she is demeaning him and making him feel incompetent. She’s really saying to him, “I don’t believe you can do this nearly as well as I can.”

**8. “I should never have married you in the first place.”** When a wife says this to her husband, she’s saying that he is to blame for all of their marriage problems. That everything is his fault.

**9. “Why can’t you be more like... ?”** As I mentioned in 5 Toxins of the Tongue that Can Poison Your Marriage, when saying things like, “Why can’t you be more like John?” (a friend’s husband) what you’re really communicating is “You don’t make the grade. You’re not good enough as a husband.”

Let’s guard our tongues as much as we guard our money, time and other resources. What we speak can do so much good, but in just a few short words, we can do so much harm. Let’s use our words to build up, not tear down.

What other phrases have you discovered that cause more hurt than help in your marriage? Share them below in our comments so that we can all learn from each other!

**Mark Merrill** *is the president of Family First. For the*

*original article, visit .*

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## **Why We Fight for Fitness, Inside and Out**

I heard Joyce Meyer say something on TV recently that struck me as rather profound. She was drawing an analogy between our physical and spiritual states, pointing out that it is just as easy to become spiritually afflicted as it is to become physical ill, and conversely, virtually impossible to become stronger in body and soul without putting in the work.

I will have to paraphrase her quote because I don't remember it verbatim, but it went something like:

"You can catch sickness. You *can't* catch health."

I'd never really thought about it before. We can stand in line at the grocery store in perfectly fine health one day, and the next day be holed up in our homes, coughing till our stomachs hurt, all because the shopping cart we used was covered in cold germs.

However, we'd be hard-pressed to find any "fit physique" germs lying around. We have to consciously, and consistently, make an effort to become fitter and healthier, through the foods we eat and the exercise routines we do. And unlike the swift onset of cold or flu symptoms, we don't experience the effects of our healthy behavior overnight. It takes time.

The same goes spiritually, as Joyce Meyer said. If we habitually hang out with the world, letting it infect us with falsehoods and unbiblical philosophies, our souls will become

sick. If we neglect to nourish ourselves with the water of God's Word and perpetually put off praying, our spirits will weaken and grow susceptible to all manner of spiritual attacks, which often manifest physically. It requires discipline to remain close to the Lord and to be changed into Jesus' image, "from glory to glory."

As Christians, we're regularly reminded, be it at church, in Bible study, through TV or social media, how to ward off and heal from spiritual diseases, as well as how to grow stronger and more resilient, like trained soldiers or disciplined runners, to use the Apostle Paul's metaphor.

We don't question that we cannot simply go to church for an hour on Sunday and expect to have victory the other 167 hours of the week. We don't deny that keeping our Bibles on the shelves is a poor choice if we want to know and declare God's unfailing truths and promises of power.

Here are some of the things we're encouraged to do on a daily basis, disciplines that the Bible assures will keep us in tiptop spiritual shape:

- Begin and end our days with prayer.
- Read our Bibles.
- Give thanks in every circumstance.
- Worship Jesus and praise our Father throughout the day.

Granted, we all stumble, and even the most pious and regimented among us have gone full days without cracking open our Bibles or bowing our heads in prayer. But our God is a God of grace, and doesn't condemn us or erase our names from the Book of Life when we falter. With His help, we are able to get back on track and put Him first. It's when staying off course becomes the norm that our spirits starve and our fleshly appetites take over.

Speaking of the flesh, now seems the appropriate time to address the quote I opened with:

“You can catch sickness. You *can't* catch health.” With countless diet fads and exercise trends promising quick results, it's easy to think that health can, in fact, be “caught!” All you have to do, some would have us believe, is take a cutting-edge, “scientifically formulated” pill, use a state-of-the-art piece of equipment, or follow an exotic diet plan that all the celebrities are raving about, and all your health and beauty dreams will come true!

This mumbo jumbo is the fitness equivalent of relying on an inspirational self-help book to rid you of your relationship woes, or leaning on Yoga, aromatherapy or transcendental meditation to make your worries melt away. Not even a week-long motivational conference can produce true and lasting peace or happiness. Why? Because only Jesus is worthy to remove our burdens, cleanse us of our unrighteousness, grant us peace, give us victory and restore our joy.

“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased” (Rev. 4:11, NLT).

Like spiritual fitness, attaining and maintaining a healthy body requires daily discipline. Here are a few of my personal favorite suggestions when it comes to leading a fit lifestyle:

- Drink water like it's your job (or, more realistically, drink half your body weight in ounces).
- Eat natural, God-made foods, for example, fruits, veggies, beef, poultry, fish, nuts, seeds, etc.
- Keep “temptation foods,” such as chips, candy bars and soft drinks, *out* of your house
- Exercise at a moderate to high intensity at least three days a week for 30-60 minutes
- When you get off track, don't beat yourself up, but instead resolve to start fresh tomorrow

As you can see, being fit and healthy doesn't come easy,

especially in today's society where sedentary lifestyles and processed convenience foods prevail. And it makes sense as to why fitness, in any area, is difficult: Satan doesn't want us to reign in life. John 10:10 says explicitly that he seeks to steal, kill and destroy! As Christians, it is our duty and honor to fight for fitness and to dedicate ourselves to a pursuit of health in all aspects of our lives.

If you currently don't have a close walk with the Lord or you don't fuel and train your body properly, start with your spiritual fitness first. You may very well find that as you strive to become more disciplined in your spiritual walk, you will feel yourself becoming inspired to eat better or exercise regularly as you align your will with God's.

When you renew your mind with God's Word and refresh your spirit by learning and meditating on His everlasting love for you, His Spirit will begin to move and whisper within your heart. It will encourage you to prioritize the things that matter most, such as spending more time with your family and your Savior and taking care of His dwelling place—that is, your body.

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