

You May Be Married, but Are You Engaged?

While cleaning out a dresser drawer, I discovered an old stash of handwritten letters that my wife sent me when we were engaged to be married.

I found myself reading through them, picking up one after another, amazed at how expressive and detailed her letters were about our upcoming wedding. She was a thousand miles away from me. Her daily letters were the only real connection that we had, other than the occasional long distance phone calls. I realize this dates me, but there was a time when calling long distance was a budgetary decision.

As I read those letters my mind went back to the excitement of our engagement. We were young and naive, but we were also motivated with the hope of pursuing our dreams together. She was unreserved in sharing her love with me. Her sweet innocence and southern charm resonated in her words without being coy about her affections.

The time had flown by and I realized that I had taken a trip along memory lane for several minutes. To be honest, I wanted to call her and tell her how proud I am of her. I wanted her to know immediately that she has lived up to and surpassed all of my expectations of a wife. I wanted that girl that was so kind to me in those letters to know as a woman that she is the love of my life.

Then, I asked myself this question, "Now that you've been married for 29 years, are you still engaged?"

To engage means to bind oneself to do something, such as a pledge to marry. It also means to get and keep someone's attention and interest; to bring together or interlock; to deal with—especially at length.

Few men will research and read good material and information on the subject. Most men's magazines are filled with articles on how to pick up women and the only attention that they teach men to give women is sexual. Many of the writers of these magazines are sophomoric in their advice, and frankly, must be novices and incompetent in relationships.

When I speak with men regarding authentic manhood, a common theme of our dialogue is marriage. I have found that although many of them want a great marriage, very few are actively pursuing ways to make it better. It seems that they put the onus on their wives to be the pursuer, rather than taking the lead and actively engaging their wives in the marriage.

Love Is Expressed in Action

Consider how women have responded when asked to complete this sentence:

"I wish my husband would love me by ..."

- By listening to me.
- By taking my 'petty problems' seriously.
- By communicating more openly with me.
- By noticing me more—not just when he wants sex.
- By saying, "Thank you," for the things I do.
- By being interested in my life ... at least acting like he's interested.
- By showing affection when other people are around.
- By sharing his goals and values with me; talking his business over with me.
- By remembering me with little gifts or just planning an evening out.
- By taking me out without the kids more—maybe just for a ride.
- By including me in the things he does.
- By trying to understand me.
- By getting involved with things I enjoy doing.

- By just holding me in his arms and talking to me.
- By being tender and using kind, tender words.
- By helping in the discipline of the children.
- By saying little words of care, compliments, and appreciation.
- By accepting me just as I am.
- By spending more time with the family.
- By making me feel like a woman.

So, rather than taking the advice from the juvenile writers at men's magazines, I recommend that you read this list a few times. If a husband is this engaged with his wife, the nighttime celebration won't be an issue.

I unashamedly say that I want to be fully engaged in my marriage. I am not interested in just going through the motions and being comfortable with the status quo.

A few years ago my wife was walking by me with the supplies needed to tackle cleaning our home. At that moment I dropped everything—schedule, phone calls, etc.—grabbed some of the supplies and said, “I am taking care of the bathrooms and dusting.” I have made it a habit to do that every week.

It is, in fact, an action that says, “I love you.”

Neil Kennedy, author of several books—including *FivestarMan: The Five Passions of Authentic Manhood*, *Centurion Principle*, *Mother's Guide to Raising a FivestarMan*, *God's Currency*, and *Speaking the Father's Blessing*—has authored articles for scholarly journals and multiple magazines, publishes *The Daily Champion* for men, and is founder of *FivestarMan*, an international movement of men.

For the original article, visit .

Should Doctors Prescribe Weight-Loss Medications?

“When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you” (Prov. 2:10-11).

When my book, *Spiritual Secrets to Weight Loss: A 50-Day Renewal of Body, Mind and Spirit*, was released in 2008, the prescription drugs available for weight loss had dropped to only two. I review them, Meridia™ and Xenical™, on Day 41.

No doubt the “Fen-Phen” disaster of the 1990s played a role. It drew much attention to drug safety. As a result of this heightened vigilance, in 2010 even Meridia™ was pulled from the market.

Since then, a few other medications have been approved, bringing the total to four: Xenical™ (nonprescription Alli™), Belviq™, Qsymia™ and Contrave™. The last one, Contrave™, was only recently given the OK by the FDA after an initial rejection in 2011. Not surprisingly, research and development in this area is intense because the health consequences are so significant. Heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, cancer and many other conditions are related to body weight.

In light of all this, many people are wondering: “Are weight-loss drugs right for me?” There is much uncertainty, especially among people of faith. In my experience, Christians have some of the strongest reservations about using medications.

Without question, it is a personal decision. As a physician and believer, however, let me suggest the following:

- **Weight-loss medications are not a quick fix.** Most will give a 5-10 percent reduction at best. So, if you weigh

220 pounds for instance, they can help you get somewhere between 200 and 210.

- **Weight-loss medications do not make losing weight easy.** Lifestyle change is still necessary. The keys I write about in *Spiritual Secrets to Weight Loss* are “Eat Well; Eat Less; Move More.” No pill eliminates the need to embrace these three.
- **Weight-loss medications do not address mental and emotional health.** Depression, anxiety and stress can trigger overeating. They can also destroy the motivation needed for regular exercise.
- **Weight-loss medications do not fill a spiritual void.** Discipline, moderation and subjecting the flesh are virtues. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. These are matured through prayer, Bible study and having a heart to obey.

So, do I prescribe weight-loss medications? Yes. And for some people, they are a great help. For others, they are not. The same goes for weight-loss surgery. What are your thoughts and experiences? Feel free to share them here.

Kara Davis is a doctor of internal medicine and a former assistant professor of medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She currently practices at the Christian Community Health Center in the Chicagoland area, and she is also the author of *Spiritual Secrets to Weight Loss* (Charisma House).

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

Scientists Tackle Puzzle of

Why Exercisers Still Gain Weight

A substantial number of people who exercise wind up heavier afterward than they were at the start, with the weight gain due mostly to extra fat, not muscle, according to a new study.

But researchers also found, for the first time, that one simple strategy may improve people's odds of shedding pounds while exercising: Eat a more sensible diet, *The New York Times* reports.

In most of the studies involving exercise and weight lost, people lost barely a third as many pounds as expected, given how many calories they were burning during workouts. Many studies have also found big variations in how people's waistlines respond to the same exercise program, with some people dropping pounds and others gaining fat.

For the research, published by *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, scientists at Arizona State University in Phoenix recruited 81 sedentary, overweight women. None had exercised regularly in the past year. The women were asked to exercise, but not change their eating habits in any way.

After 12 weeks, the women were all significantly more aerobically fit than they had been at the start. But many were fatter. Almost 70 percent of the women had added at least some fat mass during the program, and several had gained as much as 10 pounds, most of which was from fat, not added muscle.

A few of the women, though, had lost that much fat or more, and some remained at the same weight as at the start of the regimen.

The researchers suggested that it is likely that those who gained weight began eating more and moving less when they

weren't exercising.

"What that means in practical terms is that someone who wants to lose weight with exercise" should step on the bathroom scale after a month, the researchers said. If at that point your weight remains stubbornly unchanged or has increased, "look closely at your diet and other activities."

For the original article, visit .

5 Financial Red Flags That Can Sink Your Family

The joke—and it's an old one—goes like this: Fred receives a windfall of \$1,000. He asks a friend what's the best thing to do with his money.

"Open a checking account," his friend said. "Then, whenever you need some money, you just write out a check."

Fred thinks that is a great idea and does exactly that. A few weeks later, he receives a letter from the bank saying, "You have an overdraft of \$273."

So Fred goes in and meets the bank manager.

"What's an overdraft?" Fred asks.

"Well," the banker replies, "I'll keep this straightforward. It means that you owe us \$273."

"No problem." Fred responds. "Do you accept checks?"

The story may sound absurd, but we're doing exactly what Fred tried to do every time we extend our credit a little more. We're sinking deeper and deeper.

Keep your family's head above water by watching out for these 5 financial red flags that can sink your family:

1. You have no budget. If you're saying, "What's a budget?," that's an extra red flag! Do you know how much you earn? Do you know how much you spend? Is there a plan? These questions must be addressed if financial peace has even a chance. The cliché that applies here: "If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else."

2. You find yourself agreeing with the commercials. Do you want everything you are told you "need"? Are you tempted that "more" will satisfy? If you're not satisfied, then that's a sign you're pursuing the wrong treasure. More of something that doesn't satisfy is never going to be enough. It's time to reevaluate.

3. Your credit card balance is going up, not down. Try this simple equation: Always pay what you spent the previous month, plus one twelfth of the balance. It's a great way to drive the balance down. If that sounds too hard a plan, then revisit No. 2.

4. You and your wife argue about money constantly. If money has become a relationship issue, then you must be running too close to the wire. Your marriage does not benefit from that level of stress. If there are any questions regarding expenditures, then see No. 1 above.

5. You "can't afford" to give to your church or favorite charity. Many times, we plan to be generous "when the money is better." The ability to give is more than a convenience—it's critical for the balanced life.

What other red flags can you identify? Share with the AllProDad community.

Huddle Up: Take Monopoly money, give your kids the amount of a monthly paycheck and have them pay you for the amount of each

monthly expense.

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10 Foods That Increase Your Risk of Cancer

There are many foods that are known to aid health as well as many categorized simply as junk food. The fact is, some of the foods which are known to be unhealthy can actually be far more harmful than a person would think.

Certain greasy or processed foods can be especially bad for a body, including potentially causing cancer. Knowing which foods should be avoided and for which reasons can make all the difference. Some food and drink that you should limit intake of (or leave out altogether!) are:

1. Processed meat. In order to make processed meat, many different chemicals have to be added to act as preservatives. Sodium nitrate is a standard ingredient in processed meats, which is known to be a carcinogenic precursor and both Sodium Nitrite and Sodium Nitrate are both linked to causing colon cancer.

2. Diet soda. When sugar is not added to a soft drink, odds are something much worse has been. Aspartame is the normal substitute for sugar in diet soda and has been found to cause cancer as well as birth defects over 20 different studies

undertaken within Europe under the European Food Safety Authority.

3. Soda at all. All soda types have artificial sweeteners and flavorings and about ten teaspoons of sugar. Studies have shown that consumption of two units of soda per week greatly increase a person's chances of pancreatic cancer.

4. Canned tomatoes. Far from an old wives tale, the idea that tomatoes are too acidic to be canned and eaten safely is quite correct. Tomatoes contain acidity, which can break down the innermost lining of cans called bisphenol-a (BPA), a component linked to cancer and other negative health issues. Only cans that are labeled BPA-free are totally safe for tomatoes.

5. GMO foods. Forget what the USDA says on this issue: What is coming from them is not in line with worldwide studies and knowledge in the area, which is quite worrying. A study undertaken in Scotland at Rowett Institute found that a study on rats showed every single research rat had pre-cancerous cell growth and damage to their immune systems after only 10 days of eating GMO food. Effects included reduced sizes in rat's brains and livers.

6. Alcohol. There are many known health effects related to alcohol, but anyone who consumes alcohol daily (one drink every day for a woman or two drinks if you are a man) is at a risk of bowel, liver, breast, esophagus or mouth cancer.

7. Pesticide-sprayed fruits and vegetables. The truth is, all fruit and vegetables are not made the same and any plant grown with pesticides can be harmful if consumed. Fruit and vegetables are always best when they are organic. The Environmental Work Group found that there are at least 98 percent of conventional fruit and vegetables that have been grown using cancer-causing pesticides.

8. White or refined flours. Refined flour contains excess carbohydrates, which have been studied and linked to breast

cancer and rapid blood sugar rise, which causes cancer cells to grow. A recent study highlighted in the Cancer Epidemiology journal linked constant consumption of refined sugar to a 220 percent increase in breast cancer.

9. Artificial sweeteners. Most studies have found that people trying to lose weight through the use of artificial sweeteners in fact gain weight. Also, just like aspartame is to sugar, any artificial sweetener is not naturally occurring, so are chemical-based and therefore not healthy.

10. Chips. Cancerous cells grow through the intake of fat, trans-fats, preservatives, artificial flavorings and sodium, not to mention chemicals. What does this have to do with chips you ask? All of these ingredients are present in the average bag of chips.

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For the original article, visit .

Music Helps Dementia Patients Engage

Sometimes hearing a special song instantly improves our mood and kindles happy memories. Now there may be scientific proof

that music helps people suffering from dementia.

There's just something about music that seems to bring nursing home patients with dementia out of their shells.

For example, when 96-year-old Mike Knutson hears that big band sound, he taps his toes, claps his hands and smiles, according to his daughter, Barb Knutson.

"The music really does something to wake him up and help him to be more engaged with what is going on around him," she said.

Knutson is taking part in a study of 200 nursing homes. The results are being analyzed by University of Wisconsin researchers.

"This is a study to look at the effects of music listening on a number of quality of life indicators for the people with the dementia in nursing homes," Jung Kwak, a professor working on the study, explained.

She's talking about mood and memory, both immediately and long term. The results of the study could mean music therapy will be added to traditional dementia treatments and could even take the place of some medications.

But not just any music will do. The patient needs to listen to songs he or she loves.

In the study, each person has a designated iPod loaded with their own unique playlist. Dana Kugler, a therapist who has observed the patients participating in the study, has noticed a difference.

"We've seen members who don't talk very much start to sing," she said.

Because of the study, Knutson said now she and her siblings always make music a part of the time they spend with their

father.

“We feel as though we have been blessed with this whole new experience with dad,” she said. “We are able to connect in a completely different way, in a very genuine way.”

For the original article, visit .

First Hero, First Love: A Dad's Role for Sons and Daughters

I recently came across this fantastic quote about dads: “To a girl, a father is her first love. To a boy, a father is his first hero.”

These are powerful ideas that I want to unpack and reinforce this week.

For a daughter, getting love from her dad is a huge thing. How he treats her sets the tone for so many other relationships in her life. Every boy or man she meets will automatically be measured against her dad and her relationship with him. He is her ultimate standard and role model for manhood.

So, dad, if the relationship is open and warm, your daughter will be confident and will expect those same good things from the young men in her life. She'll likely make good choices about who she spends time with.

Of course, if your relationship is distant or cold, she may relate to young men as a reaction *against* what she had with you. She'll be looking to fill a void or get something she

never got from you, and she may be desperate enough to settle for less than the best, a counterfeit, or someone who gives her lots of attention, but for all the wrong reasons.

So how can you be her first love? Here are two brief points to consider:

1. Be an active listener. Really tune into not only her words, but also her expressions, body language and everything else. Honor her thoughts, dreams and ideas. Don't rush to a conclusion or a judgment. Listening shows you care.

2. Make sure she knows you think she's beautiful, inside and out. Many girls today feel pressure to look a certain way, and sadly, some dads contribute to that pressure. But our daughters need to know they're beautiful to us just as they are. They don't have to prove or change anything.

Just as important is *affirming her inner beauty*. Spend enough time with her that you really know her gifts and strengths so you can give *sincere* compliments on her sense of humor, her loyalty, courage, intelligence or sensitivity toward people.

Basically, Dad, seek to win her heart and make her feel cherished. You're already her first love; you just need to give her a positive idea about what that means.

For a son, when he first dreams of being a superhero, he's hoping his dad will show him how. We know young boys will find heroes in animated cartoons and movies. Later it's a sports star, or maybe famous actors or rock musicians. But over and above all those stands you, Dad. Your sons look to *you* as a hero, first and foremost. And you don't have to earn that title; it just comes with your role.

Of course, you can give up that title or neglect the responsibilities that come with it, but it really takes some doing to *not* be your son's hero. He has already given you that assignment. So the question to ask is "How can I possibly fill

that role?"

Dad, you already know. You need to live out virtues every day that your son can see and emulate. Be noble. Have courage. Demonstrate integrity. Put the needs of others above your own. Respect women. Stand up for what's right.

It comes back to modeling. Your son needs a living example of what it means to be a man, a husband and a father. It's something you need to be intentional about.

Be positive even in the face of conflict—with neighbors, your boss or maybe the boy's mother, after a difficult divorce. That goes a long way to teach your son how to function in tough situations with heroic resolve.

Model courage when you confront him on issues or behaviors he needs to change, and then hold him accountable. Model humility *and courage* when you go back and ask for forgiveness after you've been insensitive or too harsh with him.

Model how to love when you show him physical affection even when he gets older and it seems a bit awkward. Also, when you make the effort to listen to him and keep open the lines of communication.

These are just a few ways to be your daughter's first love, and your son's hero. These are also mentioned in our free e-book, *5 Things Every Kid MUST Get from Dad*, which has ideas for daughters and for sons. You can download it right here.

What would you add to either category? How have you been your daughter's first love and your son's first hero? Please join the discussion below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Sit with your daughter in her room and let her talk for at least 5 minutes straight, without any interruptions, as she shares about her day. Just listen. And be ready

- to share if she asks about your day.
- When relating to your daughter, instead of thinking, “What’s the answer here?” ask yourself, “What’s she feeling right now?”
 - Tell your son about your desire to be a great dad, and what that should look like from day to day. Ask him to “call you out” any time you drop the ball.
 - Take your kids with you to volunteer at a local shelter or food pantry. Demonstrate that healthy manhood includes serving others.
 - If you’re married, let your kids see that you love their mother. They need to see your heroic commitment to her; they can draw great security from that, and you’ll be setting a great example.

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 .

Study: Long-Term Cell-Phone Use Triples Brain Cancer Risk

Swedes who talked on mobile or cordless phones for more than 25 years had triple the risk of a certain kind of brain cancer compared to those who used wireless phones for less than a year, a new study suggests.

The odds of developing glioma, an often-deadly brain cancer,

rose with years and hours of use, researchers reported in the journal *Pathophysiology*.

“The risk is three times higher after 25 years of use. We can see this clearly,” lead researcher Dr. Lennart Hardell said in a telephone interview.

His finding contrasts with the largest-ever study on the topic—the international Interphone study, which was conducted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and funded in part by cell phone companies. That study, published in 2010, failed to find strong evidence that mobile phones increased the risk of brain tumors.

Even if the odds of developing a glioma were doubled or tripled, however, the risk would still remain low.

A little more than 5 out of 100,000 Europeans (or percent) were diagnosed with any kind of malignant brain tumor between 1995 and 2002, according to a 2012 study in the *European Journal of Cancer*. If the rate triples, the odds rise to about 16 out of 100,000 (or percent).

Hardell, an oncologist from University Hospital in Orebro, Sweden, and his colleague Michael Carlberg matched 1,380 patients with malignant brain tumors to people without such tumors and compared their wireless phone use.

People who reported using wireless phones for 20 to 25 years were nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with glioma as those who reported using them for less than a year, the study found. Those who used cell and cordless phones for more than 25 years were three times more likely to develop one of these tumors.

The study did not show an association of wireless phones with malignant brain tumors other than glioma.

Participants who recalled talking the most—more than 1,486

hours—on wireless phones were twice as likely to develop glioma compared to those who said they used the devices the fewest hours—between one and 122 hours, the study found.

Case control studies such as this suffer from a number of limitations, however, the most serious being the need for participants to remember their behavior patterns from decades earlier.

Dr. Gabriel Zada, a neurosurgeon at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, who wasn't involved in Hardell's study, advises precautionary measures, such as using the phone's speaker or a hands-free headset.

But he said the new study failed to answer his patients' questions about why they developed brain tumors.

"A lot of people ask me, 'Why did I get this brain tumor?'" he said. "There are a lot of different theories. It's a much more convoluted picture than just saying cell phones caused this."

In a 2012 study, Zada reported that rates of malignant tumors in parts of the brain closest to where people hold their phones rose significantly in California from 1992 to 2006—although the incidence of gliomas throughout the brain decreased.

U.S. cell phone use tripled between 2000 and 2010, according to the Wireless Association(CTIA), which represents manufacturers. But in the U.S. overall, rates of cancer in parts of the brain that would be more highly exposed to radio frequency radiation from cell phones had not gone up at the time of a 2010 report in the journal *Neuro-Oncology*.

Zada believes the current study underscores the need for more research.

"It is more evidence suggesting a possible association between brain tumors and cell phones," he said. "But it's certainly

not convincing that cell phones cause brain cancer.”

A World Health Organization panel of 31 scientists from 14 countries classified mobile phones as “possibly carcinogenic” in 2011. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission is currently reassessing the safe radiation exposure limits it adopted in 1996.

Cell phones emit radio frequency energy, which can be absorbed by tissues closest to where the phone is held, the National Cancer Institute says on its website. “Studies thus far have not shown a consistent link between cell phone use and cancers of the brain, nerves, or other tissues of the head or neck,” it says.

Hardell is one of the few researchers who include cordless phones when studying cell phones and cancer risk. He believes emissions from the base stations of cordless phones can be problematic, especially when users sleep next to them.

Children may be most vulnerable to wireless phone emissions, Hardell says. They absorb more radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, he writes, because of their small heads, thinner skulls and higher brain conductivity.

“Girls tends to put the smartphone below the pillow,” he says. “It’s a bad habit to go to bed with your smartphone.”

Zada also believes developing brains may be more susceptible and recommends against sleeping with cell phones.

Nevertheless, he says: “It’s hard to make formal recommendations because the data is lacking. It’s not smoking and lung cancer because it’s not proven.”

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Here's a Sure-Fire Weapon for Weight-Loss Discouragement

You are not alone! Last week, I created a 1-question quiz to help you identify some common sabotaging beliefs that oppose weight loss.

Over 600 of you took the quiz. Here are the top 3 results as of this date:

- This is too hard: 28 percent
- Other: 15 percent
- I messed up before so I might as well quit: 14 percent

Eye-opening isn't it? Upon further examination of the 'Other' responses, most could be summarized in this one:

- "It will always be a struggle. I always fail. I get excited, then get stuck over and over."

The Lord can help you defeat fear and discouragement! Meditate on His promise in Mark 11:22-24:

"So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them'" (Mark 11:22-24, NKJV).

Prayer will be your first weapon. Use it to start speaking to the mountains in your life. Speak this out loud: "My past does not equal my future!"

I recommend speaking the following weight-loss prayer to help you defeat fear and discouragement. You are speaking to your weight issue, confident in the power of the Lord:

“Jesus, You are worthy to be praised! When I lift You up, I am lifted up. Help me to magnify You above all toxic thinking. You magnify Your Word and Your name above all other things. The greater Your Word becomes, the smaller my challenges to weight loss become. I rebuke all thoughts that oppose Your Word. I take them captive to Your obedience. I believe Your Word, which says, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’

“Your Word says, ‘I can do.’ But my negative stronghold says, ‘I can’t do.’ Whose report will I believe? Your Word says, ‘all things,’ but my toxic thoughts say, ‘some things, but not this one.’ Whose report will I believe? Your Word says, ‘through Christ,’ but I say, ‘I’ll do it alone.’ Whose report will I believe? Your Word says, ‘who strengthens me,’ but I say, ‘I’m too weak.’ Whose report will I believe?

“This day, I believe the Lord’s report! I refuse to live in unbelief any longer. Help my unbelief. Unbelief keeps me mentally tormented. Help me, Jesus, to believe Your Word above my thoughts and feelings. They can deceive me and are persistent, like an overgrown brier patch. They try to keep me stuck where I am.

“But I know that You designed me to prosper and be in good health as my soul prospers. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, I can clear out these toxic brier patches and plant the good seed of your Word. And my efforts will succeed because Your strength empowers me!

“Help me to be diligent in keeping myself encouraged every day, Jesus. Renew my strength so that I don’t grow weary in doing well. If I mess up, I will learn from my mistakes and keep moving forward—even if I have to crawl ahead. I will get

there!

“I renounce the scale as my god. It is but a tool. It has no power over me, except that which I choose to give it. If I am allowing the scale to control me, then give me the courage to put it away, Jesus. Help me to pay attention to other signs that I am moving in the right direction for my health–boosted energy, increased confidence and greater mental focus. I praise You for every sign of progress I make! You are my rock and I depend on You to lead and guide me every day. Amen.”

*Once 240 pounds and a size 22, **Kimberly Taylor** can testify of God’s healing power to end binge eating. She is an author and the creator of the Christian weight loss website . Visit today for inspirational health and weight-loss tips.*

For the original article, visit .

3 Dangerous Lies Teen Girls Believe

I cannot express how thankful I am to live in the age of modern medicine.

When reading about medieval medical practices, I have come to a solid conclusion: If I lived during that time, more than likely with all of the injuries I have sustained, I would have died very young. Some of the things that they did to cure people are absolutely horrifying. Before general anesthesia, surgeons would put their patients into a deep sleep by having them drink a crude and highly dangerous concoction called Dwale. One of the main ingredients was three spoonfuls of hemlock juice—a highly toxic plant that alone can cause death.

Driven by the wrong information or lies, decisions were made that ultimately risked lives and caused more harm, even death.

Believing lies, in most cases, leads to disaster. Discerning the reality of the truth can be tough at any age, particularly for our kids. As our kids move into the teen years, the danger resulting from believing lies increases because it leads to toxic behavior. We need to lead them to the truth about themselves and life. In order to do that effectively, we need to identify the lies. Today, we are going to focus on teen girls. Here are three dangerous lies teen girls believe (Note: Thankfully not all teen girls believe these lies; however, these lies do have a powerful stronghold among the majority of them):

1. "I need to look or be a certain way to be loved." The media create an image that they say defines beauty. Immature teenage boys accept the definition and trip over each other for the girls they believe fit that description or come the closest. This only reinforces that definition of what is attractive in the minds of teen girls.

Every girl wants to fit that description because she equates that picture with being worthy of love. It is shown in every fairy tale and "pretty princess" story she watched as a child. So she does whatever she can to fit into that mold. She is no longer satisfied with who she is—only what she thinks she should be. When a girl sees she doesn't fit that mold (few actually think they do, even the popular ones), her opinion of herself drops. When she believes this lie, she says to herself: "I need to lose weight, then people will like me. I don't fit in. I'm not worth as much as those girls. If I am myself, others won't like me. If others know the truth about me, they'll reject me. I'm not pretty. I'm not good at anything. I'll never be loved."

2. "My self-worth depends on the approval or attention of others." Her entire focus becomes meeting the expectations of

others. She stresses out trying to meet the approval of parents, teachers and coaches, but mainly friends and boys. When faced with disapproval or lack of attention, she ceases to feel good about herself. Eventually, she becomes more and more desperate; she goes to increasingly drastic lengths to achieve attention and approval.

These things can include forfeiting core beliefs, succumbing to peer pressure, using drugs or alcohol and engaging in sexual activity. When she believes this lie, she says to herself: "I have to be perfect. I'm not good enough. Nobody loves me. I'm worthless. If I had a boyfriend, I'd feel complete. I'm unimportant. I'm not valuable. Others think negatively about me. I must meet certain standards in order to feel good about myself. I must have the approval of certain others to feel good about myself. I'll never be good enough. I'm stupid. I can't make good close friends."

3. "I'm ruined." If the last lie plays out fully and there is failure, she may buy into the lie that she is ruined—damaged goods with no possible way of recovery or wholeness. She is flooded with feelings of shame and guilt, especially when there is moral failure.

Overwhelmed and hopeless, the best way she sees to deal with the guilt and shame is to bury it down deep or numb it. Otherwise, she may also become apathetic or rebellious. When she believes this lie, she says to herself: "I'm a failure. Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished. Nothing matters anymore. It doesn't matter what I do anymore."

Be on the look out for any signs that your daughter is believing these lies. Do not let them take root in her mind and her life. Speak the truth about her beauty and value daily.

Source: *The 6 Steps to Emotional Freedom* by David Clarke,

Ph.D.

What are some truthful statements we can say to our daughters? Huddle up with your kids tonight and ask them, "Who makes you feel the best about yourself?"

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