

3 Reasons the Selfie Craze Is Damaging Our Kids

Self-portraits are nothing new. Artists have been doing them for centuries. However, those artists weren't producing 10 an hour and posting them for instant-voting results.

This is the age of the "selfie"—my least-favorite word in our culture today. Seeing young guys and girls posting provocative pictures of themselves, desperate for attention, is enough to make a parent wish for all social networks to disappear.

One of the saddest realities I've encountered, in recent years, is that high school girls will remove a picture from their Facebook and Instagram accounts if it receives fewer than 100 likes. "It validates me," said one teenager when speaking about receiving online attention. That's an unfortunate statement and, sadly, it's the norm.

Pictures go up and teens stare at the screen in the same way a Wall Street trader views a stock ticker. Some think this is a trend that will disappear when the newness wears off. Like reality television, I don't see it going anywhere anytime soon.

Whether it is producing a generation obsessed with themselves and their own image or just revealing an underlying problem, it needs to be addressed. Here are three reasons the selfie generation is damaging our kids and why we need to engage it:

1. Narcissistic behavior and tendencies The selfie is an outlet for self-focus. This brings a need for attention from peers leading to a rise in insecurity when that attention doesn't come. Conversely, a lot of attention could lead to something potentially worse, in my opinion, an inflated ego and arrogance. Someone who cares only about themselves doesn't care for others leading to a loss in empathy and difficulty in

maintaining long-lasting relationships.

2. Lower self-esteem. It's hard enough having a feeling that you are not as liked as others, particularly in middle and high school. Imagine having calculable results for everyone to see when you are in a stage of identity development. After posting a picture, the question they are waiting to see answered is, "What's my value?" Every "Like" they receive, in their mind, makes them worth a little more. Never mind the negative feedback that brings an obvious damaging effect and vulnerability to bullying. The less obvious contributor to low self-esteem is the constant comparison to others.

3. Image over identity. They are becoming experts at striking poses, forming facial expressions, tilting their head, angling the camera, and choosing exposures that will get the most positive responses. In other words, they are becoming experts at creating an image. It's what they are working on the most. The problem is that this is not their true self but a creation of what they think the world wants or finds attractive. The seeds of maturity and depth are left unsown, while superficiality remains the play of the day. Identity formation ends up lagging sorely behind, or worse, it becomes distorted.

Addressing the Issue

Be careful voicing too much disapproval. The more you rail against it, the more selfies they'll want to post. Ask questions to lead them to the promised land of understanding. The deep need they have is to be validated, valued and loved. In the end, they are just searching for it in the wrong place.

Sound off: Where do your children go to find the answer to the question, "What's my value?" Huddle up with your kids tonight and ask, "What makes you valuable?"

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How to Get Fitter and Feel Better Without Trying or Crying

I never imagined I'd be able to run a mile without stopping. But a few years ago, I set a goal that for three days a week I would hop on (more like *drag myself onto...*) the treadmill and complete a mile. Each session would consist of more running than the session before. (Sounds thrilling, doesn't it?)

Day 1 was miserable. It was the never-ending mile. Even the pop-culture drivel on the TV screen in front of me couldn't distract me from this purgatory to which I had consigned myself. I forced myself to jog at 6.0 mph in 20-second bursts, followed by 60 seconds at a recovery pace, AKA, a walk-and-catch-my-breath-and-try-not-to-look-like-I'm-dying pace.

The second day, I increased my jogging interval to 30 seconds. The third day, it was up to 40 seconds. This pattern of 10-second additions continued until one day, lo and behold, I achieved a *no-walking* 10-minute mile! I celebrated privately for approximately seven minutes by treating myself to a peanut butter/banana protein shake at the gym's smoothie bar and then went about my day.

Thereafter, I kept up the 10-minute mile about once a week, just so it wouldn't go anywhere. (For some reason, I must have had it in my head that being able to run a mile nonstop was necessary for survival and #coolness.) But by no means did I work to improve it.

When I started doing CrossFit three years later, my mile time had dropped three minutes, and no treadmill or regimented training schedule was required. I simply did the prescribed workouts along with the rest of the class, many of which didn't contain any running, only a sequence of high-intensity functional movements such as squats, push-ups, deadlifts, and lunges performed as efficiently and quickly as possible. Some days featured only heavy lifting, such as 12 sets of two deadlifts, which I happened to do alongside my husband today.

When the day came to run a mile, I expected it would take me 10 minutes, or maybe longer since I hadn't been loyal to my weekly running date. But I ran it in just over seven minutes. How could that be? And what is my point? I'll address the former question first ...

My out-of-the-blue mile P.R. (personal record) occurred as a result of consistent CrossFit training. This is because CrossFit bases its programming on improving these 10 basic physical skills:

- Cardiovascular and respiratory endurance
- Stamina
- Strength
- Flexibility
- Power
- Speed
- Coordination
- Agility
- Balance
- Accuracy

As a CrossFit athlete, I was being coached to become better in *all* of the above areas, and in so doing, the skills most conducive to running, namely speed, and endurance, were regularly challenged and honed.

When Mile Day arrived, I was ready to pass with flying

colors—and I didn't even know it. And the best part is, the preparation for this test of endurance wasn't purgatorial at all! (Admittedly, I can't say the preparation was *heavenly*, but it was infinitely more pleasurable than my loathsome treadmill appointments that had become more boring and monotonous than arduous.)

Now to answer the second question: **What's my point?**

I've had the privilege of observing not only myself, but many other CrossFit athletes surprise themselves when, seemingly out of nowhere, they are able to do things they had previously thought impossible, or at least, impossible for a great while longer. Examples include deadlifting nearly 200 pounds, touching their toes for the first time since preschool, jumping onto a 20-inch box, and squatting with an 85-pound barbell held overhead.

In each case, these athletes hadn't devised a strict training schedule intended to help them reach any specific goal. They had pushed, pulled, squatted, jumped, rowed, ran, etc., doing whatever the WOD (workout of the day) called for. From head to toe, their bodies were becoming stronger, faster, more flexible, better conditioned, and better prepared for not only life's predictable daily duties and chores, but also its unforeseen ones, like a timed mile-run, or even a sudden car accident from which the body is better able to recover the stronger it is.

My point is: **let your body do what it was created to do.** Continue to train it so that you maintain the flexibility and strength you possessed as a youth as best you can. Regardless of what you may think about CrossFit, I challenge you to forgo the machines and the mundane routines and **play at becoming fitter.**

Try a new sport with a church group or your family. Do your cardio on a picturesque trail instead of a cold, colorless

treadmill. Even if you love running marathons, working your biceps 'til you're blue in the face, or have another sport you're into, **don't leave holes in your fitness** by neglecting to challenge your strength, balance, flexibility, or whatever else you may be lacking. Doing so will allow you to enjoy life to the fullest by **strengthening** you for countless physical activities and mental tasks, **preventing injuries**, and **providing the flexibility and coordination** required for a host of tasks, from carrying groceries up flights of stairs safely to getting off the floor after playing with your kids (or dogs!) with no creaks, moans, or pops.

If going to the gym or track or *wherever* has become reminiscent of something Dante would have described in his *Inferno*, then it's high time you had a change of pace—literally. Working out doesn't have to feel like punishment and be something you dread.

In fact, a funny thing happens when you find your fitness niche: you *look forward to participating*. As you leave your workout, sweaty towel and empty water bottle in hand, you'll think to yourself, "That felt great. I can't believe I did that!"

Fitness is much like our faith. When we delight ourselves in it, wonderful results naturally follow, both physically and emotionally.

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

One Big Fight Doesn't Mean the End of Your Marriage

How many times have you been involved in a fight with your wife, left the situation unresolved and felt like the easiest thing to do would be to end the marriage? Get where I am going?

Here are a few of my typical thoughts I used to have immediately after a dispute with my wife:

"Why do I put up with this time and again?"

"Divorce would put a quick end to all of this stuff."

"There has to be an easier way than this."

Just because these are my typical first thoughts, it doesn't mean they need to be the first course of action I take after the fight. Never forget that we have an enemy and he lurks daily in our marriage (1 Pet. 5:8).

So, let me share what I use to do and what I now do. If you're with me so far, then you might want to keep reading.

Before our wedding day, we didn't receive a whole lot of training for our marriage. We did have to go through some marriage counseling, but I'm pretty sure my ears were turned off half of the time. Blame it on my age and immaturity. I mean, I had been through verbal disputes with family growing up and with other people throughout my years. How hard could solving disputes in marriage really be?

They were much harder than I thought. And when disputes did come up, I was typically left standing in an empty field that

smelled like a freshly loaded dumpster. I was completely oblivious as to what I needed to do, how to handle the conversations and how to seek a resolution. This didn't make for a great start to marriage, and for those of you who read Manturity often, you know what I'm talking about.

So here are a few ways I handled disputes with my wife early in marriage and some ways I've seen other men handle their issues. If you can relate or have your own old ways, please share them after the article in the comments.

- Shut down and want to leave her
- Shut down and wait for her to speak up
- Shut down and seek attention elsewhere

Leave Her

Leaving her was typically the first thing that would come to mind after a tough verbal dispute. It didn't matter what the issue was or what was being discussed, I just felt like being on my own and away from her would be the best option. If we couldn't work it out, I would want to at least just leave the house. Go somewhere! Anywhere! I was never sure what to do or where to go, but I don't think it ever really mattered.

Shutting down and leaving your wife after a tough dispute is never the right answer.

Wait for Her to Speak Up

Again, it didn't matter what the issue was or about, I would assume it was up to her to bring it back up and apologize. I would typically give her the silent treatment until she decided to realize how wrong or disrespectful she had been to me. It never occurred to me during this earlier years that it was my responsibility to take the lead and seek the resolution.

Shutting down and waiting for your wife to speak up first does not show leadership in your role as leader and husband.

Seek Attention Elsewhere

Porn, masturbation and seeking another woman all sound pretty extreme until you are shutdown due to a tough marital dispute with your wife. Quite frankly, these three are the most damaging activities a husband can engage in after a fight.

Porn happens because during the ongoing dispute, a man knows he won't be having sex anytime soon. He defaults to fantasy and suffers greatly from it. Masturbation happens for similar reasons. Again, sex and pleasure are most likely out of the question, so he takes matters into his own hands.

And finally, husbands who are shut down are suddenly open to the idea of maybe another woman is the best option. Maybe a co-worker or a neighborhood friend can be a better fit for you? This isn't the answer, and you'll destroy everything you've built with the woman you vowed your life too very quickly.

Shutting down and seeking attention from another source will only bring you pain and despair.

So what is the answer? How can a fight with your wife not lead you to one of the three areas mentioned above?

Here are the top ways I seek resolution after a dispute in my marriage these days:

Stop and Pray

That's right. No matter what the situation is now or no matter how mad I get at the fight, I turn to Jesus first. Now, it's not going to sound like a sweet lullaby or a quiet prayer, instead I typically start with these questions. Why God? Why is this happening in my marriage right now? What do you want me to do, or how do you want me to react?

Father, show me how I can be a good husband and leader through this situation. These are just a few things, but you get the idea. So the next time you and your wife are going at it, stop

and pray. Either pray with her or pray alone, but talk to God first. And stay there as long as you need.

Seek Resolution

In the past, our marriage issues could go on for days, even months! I'm sure you can relate to that timeline and agree that there is nothing fun about that time. I now try to seek resolution quickly. For example, my wife and I were at a baby skills class before our little dude was born and something happened in which she embarrassed me in front of everyone in the class. Granted, I didn't know anyone, but it still crushed my spirit. I gave her the look of "what did you just do" and went on with the class.

Afterward, I had a choice to make. I could either let the issue sit for days or I could bring it up in a loving way to her. Well, I swallowed what little pride I had left and spoke in a very soft tone. I mentioned that I didn't appreciate the way she treated me in the class and was very embarrassed. I told her that I was trying my best and didn't feel like I deserved that kind of treatment. Because I addressed it quickly and in a loving way, she was able to understand my side of things and we agreed to work on it in the future. That was the end of it.

I understand that there are many types of issues and mistakes that can be made in marriage, but I encourage you to not give up on your spouse or your marriage, and especially your children. Prayer must be your first priority. Accountability with another man or your Pastor could be another option. But please, don't default to one of the top three scenarios mentioned above.

Are you struggling in your marriage? Let's talk about it and seek a resolution.

Have you overcome big disputes in your marriage? Share your tips and ideas with the community!

Manturity 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 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 Manturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

Eliminating This From Your Diet Can Help With Weight Loss

In your quest to lose weight, there are physiology challenges. First, you have to be determined to lose weight. Next, I suggest filling out a diet sheet. Write down what you eat and drink everyday.

Most of your hidden calories come in the form of soda, milkshakes, specialty-coffee drinks and alcohol. I consulted with a young man recently who needed to lose at least 100 pounds. He had wheat with each meal, but no vegetables or protein. He wants to lose weight, but unless he changes, he will not lose a pound. It will take at least two years, but as I told him and you: Change your habits, NOW.

Your liver is a workhorse. If your liver is congested, your probability of dropping the extra pounds will be slim to none, (no pun intended).

How do you know if your liver is congested? Do you have spider

veins, hemorrhoids or varicose veins? Do you drink alcohol, or eat trans fat and high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS)?

Do you have a heavy menses or experience tender breasts? Do radishes, green peppers or onions bother you? If you answered yes, your liver is congested.

Your thyroid is the gas pedal. Do you have cold hands and feet? Are you constipated? Do you have thin hair or loss of outer eyebrow hair? What about morning headaches after eating sweet fruit or dessert before bed? If yes, you need to have your thyroid assessed.

Your adrenal gland is the fuel pump. Are you stressed? Do you have belly fat that will not go away? Does bright light bother your eyes? Do you get dizzy from a sit to stand? Does your blood pressure drop from sit to stand?

If you are under stress, and you have high cortisol, your body is burning muscle. You need all the muscle you can in order to burn those extra calories.

Miscellaneous Questions

1. Do you eat organic or conventional food? I have had patients lose 25 pounds by eating organic food.

2. What type of oil do you use? If you use trans fat (hydrogenated oil) instead of olive or rice oil to sauté your food, you will be 7% heavier.

3. Do you use HFCS (high fructose corn syrup)? You will not have enough leptin to say you are “full”.

4. Do you eat MSG? Mice are usually thin, but when they need fat mice for experiments they pump them with MSG.

5. Does your body get enough Vitamin D?

6. Are you constipated?

7. Do you exercise?

8. Do you drink diet soda? I have had patients lose 15 pounds in one month after getting off the DIET!

Where should you start? Eat whole foods; avoid desserts, soda and alcohol. Eat vegetables; drink water, exercise, and get sleep for growth hormones.

Dr. Robert DeMaria is a catalyst for health and well-being. As owner of the Drugless Doctor brands, Dr. Bob's techniques have restored optimal health to thousands of patients without the need for prescription medication. His research and daily experiences can be seen throughout his seven books, including the best-seller *Dr. Bob's Drugless Guide to Balancing Female Hormones*. Dr. Bob has consulted for FedEx, VitaMix and other national brands and has appeared on multiple media portals, including ABC Family, TBN, Fox 8 Cleveland, and WFAN NYC.

For the original article, visit .

Biblical Archaeology Sees Golden Age in Israel

At a time when many archaeological sites and antiquities throughout the Middle East are being looted and destroyed, the City of David Foundation, in September, hosted its annual conference to enable the general public to experience some of the most important archaeological discoveries in Jerusalem in recent years.

A special portion of this year's conference was devoted to the theme "Jerusalem of Gold," highlighting several never-before-

seen golden artifacts.

"The people in ancient times, like today, used gold for the most important things in life. It shows what they held dear and what was most important to them," Ahron Horovitz, senior director of Megalim, the City of David's Higher Institute for Jerusalem Studies, told .

The main themes of the artifacts on display related to war, beauty, and holiness or sanctity. Among the golden artifacts is the largest cache of gold coins ever discovered in Jerusalem, comprising 264 gold coins that date back to the end of the Byzantine period in the 7th century CE. The coins were found in the "Givati Parking Lot dig" conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority in the City of David neighborhood.

The coins are unique in that they were minted in Jerusalem, not in Constantinople—the Byzantine imperial capital—and were likely made in preparation for the Byzantine war against the Persians.

"The coins were found stacked one on top of another and were never dispensed," Horovitz said. "There may be a story of intrigue here as to why they never were used, such as it being stolen."

Additionally, a golden medallion featuring inscriptions of a menorah, shofar, and Torah scroll are on display for the very first time. The medallion was found in the Ophel excavation south of the Temple Mount and was believed to have been hung on a Torah scroll as a breastplate.

The discovery of the Jewish medallion, dating back to the time of upheaval in Jerusalem during the Persian-Byzantine wars, was a surprise for archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar, who unearthed the artifact. There are normally not many Jewish items found from that period.

Mazar estimated that the medallion originates from the Persian

conquest of Jerusalem in 614 CE. That year, many Jews helped the Persians conquer Jerusalem from the Byzantines, only to have the Persians turn against the Jews and ally with the Byzantine Christians later on, leading to the Jews' expulsion once again.

"These finds tell us about the Jewish presence in Jerusalem in the late Byzantine period, which we didn't know much about," renowned Israeli archaeologist Dr. Gabriel Barkay, who spoke at the City of David conference, told .

"The artifacts help us understand that there was a strong messianic desire of the Jewish people at that time; many of them likely came from abroad in hopes of construction of the Third Temple," he said.

Horovitz said the artifacts highlight the special bond Jews have with Jerusalem, as well as Jewish continuity in the holy city.

"It shows us that the Jews have a very special bond and connection with Jerusalem that continues to today," he said. "So when modern day Israelis come and see these artifacts, they can feel that they are part of Jerusalem from a long time ago."

Another golden artifact on display was an earring made of gold inlaid pearls and emeralds that dates back to the Roman period. A copy of this earring was given to First Lady Michelle Obama by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when she visited Israel in 2013.

Finally, one of the most unique and rare items on display was a golden bell discovered by Eli Shukron, an Israeli archaeologist and former director of City of David excavations for the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Throughout the years, Shukron has made a number of very significant finds from the period of the Second Temple of

Jerusalem in and around the City of David, including the Pool of Siloam (mentioned numerous times in the Old and New Testaments), tunnels leading from the Western Wall, an ancient pilgrim road to Jerusalem, and the legendary citadel captured by King David when he conquered the city from the Jebusites.

One of the items Shukron discovered during his excavations of one of the Western Wall tunnels was a golden bell believed to have been part of the official vestments of the high priests of the Jewish Temple.

Described in Exodus 28:31-35, the priestly robe, also known as the "ephod," was a sleeveless purple-blue or violet garment worn by the high priests that was fringed with small golden bells alternating with pomegranate-shaped tassels of blue, purple, and scarlet wool.

The golden bells were a necessary part of the ephod and needed to ring when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies.

"At first I just thought it was a ball and didn't realize it was the golden bell from the high priests until I shook it and heard the ringing," Shukron told. "No other artifact from the high priests like this has ever been discovered before."

The City of David conference came amid a perilous time for Middle East archaeology, as sites from North Africa to Iraq have come under assault by Islamic fundamentalists and looters taking advantage of the breakdown of central governments.

"I think it is an atrocity," Horovitz said. "Islamic fundamentalist groups are on an ongoing crusade to destroy antiquities because they consider it against their religion, or they fear that their religion will be undermined by excavations that will show things that they are not happy about."

The situation for artifacts is particularly dangerous in Syria and Iraq, where the Islamic State jihadist group has taken

over large swathes of territory.

According to a report by *The Guardian* in June, Islamic State looted about \$36 million in antiquities from the al-Nabuk region in Syria.

Reports indicate that much of the illegal smuggling, which is taxed by the Islamic State, is done by local Syrians and Turkish nationals, who then smuggle the artifacts across the border into Turkey and sell them to international antiquities traffickers on the black market.

Meanwhile, in the Iraqi city of Mosul, which was conquered by the Islamic State in June, the terror group has already destroyed important religious sites such as the Tomb of Jonah (the famous biblical prophet who was swallowed by a whale), and has threatened the Mosul Museum, which contains numerous artifacts from the nearby ancient city of Nineveh.

"These areas are where human culture began; they are the cradle of civilization. [Islamic State] is destroying the heritage of mankind," Horovitz said.

The frightening situation in the Middle East stands in stark contrast with Israel, which has one of the most robust and highly regulated antiquities departments in the world and is eager to preserve the country's diverse past.

Nevertheless, the City of David Foundation, which works with the Israel Antiquities Authority in excavating important areas in Jerusalem, has come under intense scrutiny from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which has called on the City of David to halt historical excavations.

"We should think about proper care of the cultures of the past," Barkay said. "Instead of condemning these acts of looting that go on all the time in these Arab countries, UNESCO is obsessed with excavations and acts of preservation

in Jerusalem because of political reasons.”

He added, “UNESCO should deal with salvaging the heritage of mankind instead of political matters.”

For the original article, visit .

4 Strategic Tips for Planning a Family Meal

How many nights per week do you have a family dinner together at home? According to a Gallup poll, only one out of four families eat dinner together every day. It used to be the norm, but now it’s a thing of the past.

Most families are busy, so much so that eating meals at home together is very difficult. Like most, our family fits into this category. One way we try to be different is by eating dinner at home daily. I’ll admit that sometimes those family dinners are as simple as sandwiches and chips. But the point is, we have family dinners consistently.

Being together for meals at home is something our kids have come to depend on. It allows our kids to share what’s on their minds and gives us a doorway into their lives. This month, it’s the Basic Training habit we encourage you to adopt. Here are four practical ways to make this happen:

1. Create a family meal plan together. “Fail to plan, plan to fail.” One of the biggest deterrents to family dinner at home is the lack of a plan. Sit down as a family and map out a basic meal plan for the week. It doesn’t have to be elaborate. You may want to include a leftover night or a “breakfast

night,” where you can reheat leftovers or eat quick breakfast food on busy evenings. If you need some recipe ideas check out Sunday Suppers from Susan Merrill.

2. Block out a window of time that you’d like to have dinner each evening. Once you plan the meals for the week, you want to plan the ideal time you’ll have them. And put it in your calendars—both personal and family. Parents and kids may have to set some boundaries to make this happen. It makes it more challenging when it’s not in the calendar.

3. Choose a couple of “go-to” games or conversation starters. Make the time together fun. Take the “how was your day” conversation and turn it into “High/Low” or something else. This will make the entire family anticipate having dinner together each day as well as create some great memories.

4. Make the prep and clean up a family affair. If you want to keep it going, you must make it manageable for everyone. If one person has the planning, prep, cooking, and clean-up duties all to themselves, you can bet burnout will follow soon and family dinners will start to become a thing of the past. Assign everyone a task or tasks, no matter their age, and work together.

Huddle up with your family and plan ways to have more family dinners at home.

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This Detoxifying Agent Can Make Your Liver Healthier

In this day and age, avoiding exposure to toxins, bacteria and other harmful elements is almost next to , the human body is so strategically designed that there is a specific organ dedicated to fight against these toxins.

The liver is the primary organ responsible for detoxification and helps remove toxins and wastes that can damage your organs and overall health. However, the liver needs support from time to time in order to function properly. In this case, milk thistle can lend a helping hand.

Here is everything you need to know about milk thistle and why it is a great detoxifying ingredient.

What is Milk Thistle?

For more than 2,000 years, milk thistle or *Silybum marianum*, which is native to southern Europe, has been used a natural treatment for various conditions affecting the liver, kidney and gall bladder. In Europe, this herb is a prescribed medication to treat alcoholic cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis and drug and alcohol-induced liver damage among many others.

Studies that will prove the herb's healing powers. Believe it or not, the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health have stored more than 400 scientific studies of milk thistle. All studies concluded that the milk thistle extract can be used to maintain liver health and protect your liver from various effects of toxins.

How Does it Work?

Milk-thistle seeds are packed with *silymarin*, a bioflavonoid complex that is responsible for the main medical benefits of

this herb. It is also made up of three main flavonoids:

- Silybin, which makes up 50 percent to 70 percent of silymarin and the most biologically active and beneficial component of the bioflavonoid.
- Silydianin
- Silychristin

Through these components, milk thistle is able to protect your liver cells by blocking the entry of harmful toxins and in removing these toxins from your liver cells, in case they were able to penetrate inside your body.

What Are the Benefits?

There are a lot of them. Authors such as Johann Gottfried Rademacher and Henry Leclerc mentioned the benefits of milk thistle as an effective treatment for liver diseases. To be specific, here are the health benefits of this wonder herb.

- Protection from liver damage.
- Cirrhosis and liver scarring, although this once requires further research.
- Stimulates liver cell protection.
- Promotes cell regeneration.
- Treats diabetic nephropathy or kidney disease.
- Boosts antioxidant activity.
- Cures mushroom poisoning.
- An effective treatment for viral hepatitis.

Milk thistle is a gentle herbal remedy that can be safe and used by anyone. Despite these health benefits, milk thistle can cause adverse effects especially when not taken properly. It can cause headache, skin reaction and even gastrointestinal problems.

The best way to use milk thistle is to combine it with a liver cleansing diet. Take lots of garlic, grapefruit, green tea, beets, leafy green vegetables, apples, avocado, olive oil,

lemon and whole grains. You can even mix it with other liver-friendly herbs too.

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For the original article, visit .

Scary Symptom Newly Identified With Child Virus

Children across America are flooding into emergency rooms with severe respiratory symptoms, including difficulty breathing, due to an outbreak of Enterovirus-D-68, also known as E-V-D-68. Doctors suspect the virus killed one child, a 4-year-old New Jersey boy, but that has yet to be confirmed.

So far nearly 300 children have been diagnosed with E-V-D-68, and that number is expected to continue to rise. The outbreak has been reported in 44 states.

Now doctors suspect another symptom may be associated with the virus: paralysis.

Nine children admitted to a Colorado hospital are suffering from an inability to adequately move their hands and legs. Four of them tested positive for E-V-D-68. Doctors say they

need to know more before definitely linking the paralysis with E-V-D-68, but they suspect that may indeed be the case.

The paralysis is caused by the virus infecting the central nervous system and the spinal cord and causes injury to some of the cells that affect movement. The good news is, doctors say the paralysis is likely temporary, and the children will begin to move normally as their bodies fight the virus.

However, doctors will not rule out the possibility that the paralysis may be permanent in rare cases.

E-V-D-68 is a respiratory virus and usually hits children with asthma the hardest. Most of the children admitted to the hospital with severe E-V-D-68 symptoms are asthmatic or have some other type of chronic respiratory condition.

The virus usually starts like the common cold. Symptoms include a cough, runny nose and sneezing. If your child has these symptoms, don't worry. They need to stay in bed and get lots of fluids.

The problem comes when these symptoms get worse. Take your child to the doctor right away if he or she has difficulty breathing and begins wheezing.

This virus spreads through close contact, much like the common cold. Parents are advised to teach their children basic hygiene.

The best prevention against bacterial and viral infections is to wash hands thoroughly (lathering for 20 seconds, or the time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice) and use hand sanitizer.

Clean and disinfect surfaces that are often touched, such as door knobs, television remotes and kitchen items. Viruses are more resilient than bacteria and can live on hard surfaces for up to two days.

Hugging, kissing, even shaking hands can spread the virus. Children should be taught not to share glasses and cups as well as silverware, and should avoid touching their mouth, eyes or nose with unwashed hands.

Parents with sick children should keep them home to prevent spreading the virus.

There is no vaccine for E-V-D-68, and no pharmaceutical treatment is available. Antibiotics do not help at all. For children who are hospitalized with severe symptoms of E-V-D-68, health-care workers focus on treating the symptoms, which may involve oxygen therapy. Doctors also concentrate on strengthening the patient's immune system, which can involve giving the child I-V fluids and electrolytes.

For the original article, visit .

Marriage Lessons We Can Learn From a Wise King

Recently, my wife, Susan, and I were thrilled to attend the Nashville premiere of a deep, moving drama, *The Song*. The inspiration for the film comes from the life and writings of the ancient King Solomon, a man known in history for being the wisest of all wise men.

He wanted to do things right. He wanted to fix the messes his dad had made. And he wanted to avoid making the same mistakes he'd seen made by his dad. Of course, if you know anything about King Solomon, he proved that just because you have wisdom doesn't always mean you'll use it.

This great date-night film retells the life of Solomon from the viewpoint of an up-and-coming musician, played skillfully by Alan Powell. Jed King is a man on a mission ... to live better than his infamous country music superstar father, and to sing about things worth singing about. He wants to find true love. He wants to do something meaningful.

And he wants to live life right ... and really live.

But just like the ancient king, Jed finds himself craving more: more fans, more money, more fame, more meaning and love in all the wrong places.

Here are some life lessons we can learn from an ancient king and a rock star:

- We must listen to our spouse and watch for signals they're giving us.
- We are all tempted, but we don't have to give in to temptation.
- It's easy to justify doing something wrong by thinking it is being done for the right reasons.
- Love wins.

In the movie, Jed practically begs his wife to come with him on his music tour, but she brushes him off saying she has too many responsibilities at home. He knows he's being tempted by another band member and needs his wife with him.

It's so important to really listen to our spouses in their struggles against temptation and keep open lines of communication about any temptations that come our way.

I won't give away the decision Jed made in the movie relating to the woman who tried to seduce him, but remember ... just because we are tempted doesn't mean we have to give in to temptation. There is always a way of escape.

In the movie, Jed shares with his wife that he needs to be on

the road more because he is helping and inspiring people with his music. And he's providing a "better life" for his family. But the life he starts leading is not helping others, and being absent from his home is certainly not better for his wife and kids.

King Solomon and Jed King both found that fame, fortune, power and pleasure will never really satisfy. Only love will ... loving God and loving others, especially our spouses and children.

I hope you'll see this awesome film. And, when you do, please let me know what you think and what you learned. In the meantime, please share your comments below.

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

Is This the New Diet Pill That Finally Gets It Right?

Federal regulators' approval of a new weight-loss drug this month marked the third time a new diet medication has hit the market since 2012. Called Contrave, the latest drug can be used by obese and overweight adults who have at least one other obesity-related condition, such as high blood pressure or Type 2 diabetes.

In an interview on *Newsmax TV's Meet the Doctors* program, two leading health experts note that Contrave is only the latest in a long line of diet pills, many of which have proven to be ineffective or risky. But the new pill, manufactured by Orexigen Therapeutics of La Jolla, Calif., has a few things

going for it that past fat-fighting medications did not.

First, it is a combination of two previously approved medications—naltrexone, which treats alcohol and drug addiction, and bupropion, used to combat depression and help smokers quit—that have proven safety records. Secondly, Orexigen has agreed to conduct continuing safety trials that will look at possible heart risks and safety of use in children and teens down the road, the Food and Drug Administration said.

In addition, Contrave is not being sold as a cure-all for weight loss and isn't for everybody. According to the FDA, it is only effective when used in combination with a healthy lifestyle—including a nutritious low-calorie diet and exercise—and is only to be prescribed as part of an overall weight-loss plan.

For these reasons, endocrinologist Rachel Pessah-Pollack, M.D., says the new medicine holds great promise for people who combine its use with regular exercise and a reduced-calorie diet.

"Of course obesity is a major problem we're dealing with every day ... [and] this drug is especially targeted for patients that are having issue with obesity despite increasing their activity and following a good diet," she notes. "It's [to be used] in combination with everything else in their lifestyle."

She adds that Contrave works by changing brain chemistry, which is an entirely new way to combat obesity.

"We're working with the brain, we're trying to help people lower their appetite ... and lower the enjoyment they get from eating food, and that's a different way of losing weight than what we've been used to," she explains.

Medical entrepreneur Joseph V. Gulfo, M.D. notes Contrave was first recommended for approval by an FDA advisory panel in

2011, but the agency rejected it at the time. On *Meet the Doctors*, Dr. Gulfo argues the FDA should have approved the drug years ago, when it had all the evidence it needed that the medication is not only effective, but also safe.

He says the FDA's delayed action on Contrave is only the latest to indicate that effective new treatments are being kept from American consumers because government red tape has tied the agency's hands.

"Contrave should have been approved 3.5 years ago because they had a positive ... FDA panel of experts who voted 13 to 7 in favor of the drug, but the FDA rejected it," says Dr. Gulfo, author of *Innovation Breakdown: How the FDA and Wall Street Cripple Medical Advances*. He adds: "This poor company got victimized ... and that's what it's really all about: [the need to] get drugs that are safe and effective in the hands of the doctors."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than one-third of adults in the United States are obese, while another third are considered overweight.

The FDA approved Contrave for people unable to lose weight through diet and exercise alone who aren't ready for weight-loss surgery. The FDA decision was based on the results of multiple trials involving 4,500 people. One study found that 42 percent of people who took Contrave lost 5 percent of their body weight, compared to 17 percent who took an inactive placebo. A second study found 36 percent of people with Type 2 diabetes who took Contrave lost 5 percent of their weight, while only 18 percent of those on a placebo did.

Contrave is not the first pharmaceutical weapon in the nation's war on obesity. In fact, the first diet pills were developed more than 100 years ago. Since then, a host of fat-fighting medications have been marketed—some of which have been linked to dangerous side effects, including abnormal

heartbeats, high blood pressure, and even death.

In the 1950s and '60s, stimulants, hormones and laxatives became weight-loss drugs of choice, but nearly all posed health hazards. In the 1990s, about 18 million prescriptions were written each year for the popular drug combo fen-phen at the height of its popularity—until increased heart risks tied to the medication led to its removal from the market in 1997.

Since then, other diet pills have entered the market, including Orlistat, sold by prescription as Xenical and over-the-counter as Alli, which works by reducing the amount of dietary fat absorbed by the digestive tract.

And the FDA has approved two other weight-loss drugs in just the past two years—Qsymia and Belviq. But neither has sold well, despite the hype they both received when they hit the market.

Dr. Pessah-Pollack says the FDA's approval for Contrave gives doctors another option to help patients who are already making efforts to lose weight by adopting healthy habits.

But it is not for everyone, and—like past diet pills—Contrave can cause risky side effects. Because it contains bupropion, the label will include a boxed warning about the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors associated with antidepressants. It can also increase blood pressure, and should not be used in people with uncontrolled high blood pressure, according to the FDA. In addition, Contrave increases the risk for seizures, and should not be used by those with seizure disorders. If it does not work after 12 weeks, the patient should stop taking it, the agency said.

"I am still very hesitant about using weight-loss drugs, and that needs to be reiterated, we don't have long-term data," Dr. Pessah-Pollack notes. "[But] for the right patient who's exercising and watching their diet, it's great."

For the original article, visit .