

# Patience With God: Are We There Yet?

Children are notoriously impatient—antsy is more like it. Mine were forced to hold my hand, stand in line at the hardware store, and forced to go “shopping” with mom.

The waiting game inevitably broke them down emotionally—it’s called a meltdown. We had the “sit, flop, and fume” to the “slap-the-toy out of your hand you are dangling in my face” to the “pouting Pearl Harbor” complete with explosions of anger and tears. On long drives to my parents’ house every Christmas. they all asked, “Are we there yet?”

Right, kids?

Men are just bigger versions of our “mini-me’s” with bigger needs and bigger destinations, but the same impatience—especially with God who, like our parents, does not wear our watch.

We are trained by an “easy button” culture to believe that both private and public delays are the enemy. We are trained to lust after the product not endure the process. We work hard to ensure faster, smoother and easier *exactly* to avoid slower, more difficult and harder. Then life happens. Delays happen that we didn’t plan. Denials happen that we never expected.

We don’t “flop and fume,” but the negative emotions connected to waiting can destroy us from the inside out and, in the process, lead to some slippery slopes. We try to speed things up. We say and do things impulsively. We take wrong risks. We take control of the process, and that decision backfires.

Most men think the waiting game is for losers or the incompetent. The fact is that we all must play it, whether we like it or not, regardless of what we are waiting for. Every

man will have moments and seasons when progress has been halted and patience is demanded.

The Bible has a lot to say about *why* we need patience. It's a reflection of wisdom (Prov. 19:11), it's better than pride (Eccl. 7:8), it shows great understanding (Prov. 14:29), it calms a quarrel (Prov. 15:18), it's loving (1 Cor. 13:4), and we're commanded to be patient (James 5:7-8, I Thess. 5:14, Eph. 4:2 and Zeph. 3:8).

But the real trick is actually doing it. Being patient with the process takes practice. It's like exercise that needs to be done daily. So for those patience-challenged men, try taking a W-A-L-K with God the next time you find yourself needing to wait, and jot down your thoughts in a journal using the following outline.

**W – atch God's movements.** In John 3, Jesus used "wind" to explain God's spirit, which is constantly moving. Although you can't see the wind, you can see the effects of the wind, just like with God's Spirit. In Gen. 8:1, Noah had to play the waiting game, and God sent wind. Being patient doesn't mean sitting idle. It's an opportunity to observe God's movements. You will find that God is not idle either. He's working, often behind-the-scenes on our behalf.

**A – cknowledge God's sovereignty.** "Sovereignty" means possessing supreme or ultimate power and authority. God is the Almighty One, Creator of the universe, Author of life and Savior of our souls. He's good, really good. And His plans generally work out with perfect timing (wink). Waiting for God means acknowledging His sovereignty. He is worthy of our praise and adoration. Often, we need to chill and "Be still, and know that I am God" as written in Psalm 46:10.

**L – isten to His voice.** Through regular meetings with God, you will refine an ability to listen to His voice, His Spirit. He wrote the Bible for us to connect and listen to Him. He sent

His Son Jesus to deliver the message of hope. He taught us how to pray. He created us for a relationship, which requires communication. So, while waiting for God, ramp up your time with God, seek Him by reading the Bible, engage Him with your questions, and take time to listen.

**K – indle an expectancy with faith.** Waiting for God is largely a test of faith. But the more we watch Him, acknowledge Him and listen to Him, the better able we are to expect great things in good time. In Rom. 8:18-20, we read “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.”

Finally, remember that God is patient with us too. We’re a work in progress, and that takes time.

- *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).*

See more verses about patience below:

- *“We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised” (Heb. 6:12).*
- *“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes” (Psalm 37:7).*
- *“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry” (Psalm 40:1).*
- *“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (Psalm 27:14).*

**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 now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.*

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **How Does Your Body React to Stress and Anxiety?**

Have you ever thought about the process our body goes through while responding to a panic attack? Knowledge of this mechanism can help us control our anxiety, fears and phobic reactions.

The human body has a strong defense system. The mechanism comes into action the moment it senses fear or external threat. A series of actions are involved behind our body's single gesture of response.

In the first second of the panic attack, eyes or ears being the first witnesses of the anxiety trigger detect it and send an alarm message straightaway to the emotional hub (or the fear hub) of the brain, which is known as the amygdala. At this instance, the logic hub of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is dominated by amygdalae.

Amygdalae instruct the adrenal glands to discharge adrenaline and cortisol—the stress hormones. As a result, the person experiences rapid sweating, quick breathing, increased heart rate and pupils' dilation.

These responses help the person remain composed and focused on the situation. Sweating keeps the body calm, increased

breathing and heartbeat facilitate the transportation of oxygen to muscles while pupil dilation aids in keeping a watch on the panic trigger.

In the next five seconds, the brain starts secreting endorphins and natural painkillers in order to safeguard the body from a physical attack that may occur. Some amount of dopamine, which is the feel-happy hormone, is also released to balance the emotional condition. Dopamine however does not completely eradicate the feeling of anxiety or fear.

At this point, the person needs to consciously make an effort to calm down his nerves. At times people fail to do so and become unconscious because of the sudden increase and decrease in blood-pressure levels.

If a person is unable to get himself composed, he should immediately leave the site so the human mind comes out of panic mode. As soon as the person stops seeing or hearing the panic trigger, the visual or auditory sense transmits a message to the amygdala to stop releasing the stress hormones. This way, the body returns to the normal working state.

The time frame varies from person to person. Some may feel nervous for a few days, while others may overcome their anxiety quickly. In case of real phobic people, the brain will respond with the same intensity whenever exposed to the trigger unless the person shows some courage and compels his or her brain to act more logically in such situations.

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# 3 Ways to Overcome Weight-Loss Discouragement

Have you ever worked on your weight-loss plan, got on the scale and then discovered you haven't lost anything ... or worse, actually gained weight? Biblical words of encouragement can help.

During those times, you may think "What's the use? I might as well eat what I want, because what I am doing is not making any difference."

Hold on there! Don't make the mistake of cursing your efforts to do good.

Before you quit, please take these words to heart. I have three reasons it is important that you resist the urge to quit. They all involve the power of time.

**1. Bible encouragement for the past.** You've probably tried dozens of diets. You stuck with your plan for a while, and then discouragement set in. What did you do in response? You quit before, right? The only reason you must work on this again now is because you quit before.

So you know where quitting leads you. Do you really want to go there again? Even if you did not get what you wanted in the time frame you set, at least you would be closer to your goal now if you had not quit. Learn to develop a "never surrender" attitude regarding weight loss.

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (Gal. 6:9)."

**2. Bible encouragement for the present.** If you keep going, at

least you would have the satisfaction of forward motion. Even if you have to crawl toward your goal, do that until you have the strength to walk again.

One of my favorite quotes that states the benefits of endurance is by Eleanor Roosevelt:

“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’ You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

I recommend you start tracking your food intake if you aren't already. I know that is not fun to do, but from my experience, it is too easy to “forget” the amounts we eat. But your body never forgets. Here are some biblical words of encouragement regarding endurance:

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1).

**3. Bible encouragement for the future.** If you make up your mind that you will not quit no matter what, imagine where you will be one year from now. You will be amazed at how far you've come. I gained 100 pounds after high school—all because I didn't respect the power of time.

You see, I didn't realize that just by over-eating 50 calories every day, I would gain five pounds every year. Those five pounds every year eventually added up to 100 pounds over 20 years. So believe me, even if you can only manage a little more self-control today than you had yesterday, exercise it!

I believe if I had used enough self-discipline to exercise off just those extra 50 calories per day, then that 100-pound weight gain would not have happened. Whatever you can do, do

that. Here is some Bible encouragement about the future:

“Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; For the future of that man is peace” (Psalm 37:37).

I pray many prayers to you on your weight-loss journey. Yes, it is a journey, because your responsibility to take care of your body will remain as long as you live. But it is a journey that is well worth taking for the quality of your life!

*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 .*

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## **Israel's Arab Christians Bring Hope to Syrian Refugees**

We can't tell you the name of the organizer of this beautiful act of love originating from the Israeli Body of Messiah to the Syrian people. We can't show you many of their faces for fear of persecution or retaliation.

Although my name is on the bi-line, this story is from God's people among Israel's Arab Christians who have reached out to the Syrian refugees who have fled for their lives into Jordan.

Here is their story ...

The United Nations said recently that Syria's "hemorrhaging" of its people is the worst refugee crisis in modern history. Such a statement doesn't begin to describe the situation

accurately. In our visit to Jordan early this year, we met so many Syrian refugees and displaced people for whom life has turned into one long nightmare. The U.N. and many NGO's are trying their best to ease the disaster but they can't begin to take care of 1,500,000 Syrians in the small and poor nation of Jordan.

Despite the dark tunnel the Syrians live in, we are shining a light with the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Jordanian churches. Our team of six Arab believers from Israel worked with several churches in Jordan and carried the Light of the gospel to every city and home we visited.

We met hundreds of Syrians in Jordan and heard so many sad and horrifying stories about their exodus from Syria to Jordan via the desert. They shared with us their fears and pain as they lost loved ones and family members whom they will never see again. To be honest, we couldn't hold back our tears as we heard their stories. We, in turn, shared with them the Only Hope for the world today—Yesua HaMasiach (Arabic for Yeshua HaMashiach) of Nazareth.

The Body of Messiah in Israel—both Jews and Arabs—gave us \$34,000 to reach out to the Syrians in a practical way. Since all the goods we planned to give to the Syrians had to be purchased in Jordan, we went to Jordanian grocery stores and clothing stores and bought essentials that the U.N. and other organizations don't offer—such as milk for children, diapers, jackets, warm clothes, toys and candy for children.

Other items we purchased, also not provided by any other humanitarian aid organization, were hygienic kits and personal cleaning items such as soaps and shampoo. We also bought heaters and blankets, small cooking stoves, cooking pans, milk for older children and mattresses.

Our team visited the four cities of Mafraq, Irbid, Amman and Fuhais. We worked through the local churches that are doing an

amazing job among the refugees. In one particular church, every Tuesday night more than 130 Syrian Muslim families meet and hear the Word of God. They receive free Bibles and other literature together with food packages.

The day we were at that particular church, we distributed more than 350 hygienic kits in addition to the food packages the church provided. For two hours we talked to Syrian refugees, serving them and sharing the Word of God with them. I have never seen a church full of Muslim women as in the picture. What a sight.

We also met by divine appointment a Syrian woman who is a well-known figure in Syria and a strong born-again believer. Of course we cannot show you her picture. We gave her \$3,000 to spend on the saints in Syria. We laid hands on her and prayed and prophesied that Yeshua is building His church in Syria.

We also found a way to transfer \$18,500 to seven churches inside Syria—in the north.

We could see the joy in the eyes of anxious children as we ministered to them and gave them toys. We saw hunger for the truth as people started to question Islam. Endless opportunities are opening for Israel's Arab Christians to bring the gospel to the Syrian people.

The refugees were so thankful to us. They told us, "When we approached Muslim Imams, mosques and Islamic institutions thinking they would open their hearts to us as their brethren in Islam to help us, we were shocked that they never responded to our needs or offered any help. But when we approached the churches, they opened their hearts and their doors to us and gave us beyond their capacities. Thank you for loving us!"

This organization made a second trip last April. This time the Israeli team included six Arab pastors and four Messianic Jews, three of them pastors.

Here is their latest report ...

Two thousand years ago, a man named Saul was on his way to Damascus to terrify and kill those early followers of the Messiah. As you know, on the way he met Yeshua who changed his life and became his Lord and Master. He entered Damascus as a terrorist and left it as an Apostle. What a powerful story of salvation that made Saul, the terrorist, Paul, the Apostle.

Today in Syria there are so many people like Saul who need a personal encounter with the Messiah. The question Saul asked, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" is the same question we are asking the Lord today. What does He want us to do in Jordan? Syria is our enemy, politically, but as the One Body of Messiah, we have an historic opportunity to share the love of the Messiah with them in a very practical way.

This spring trip to Jordan was divided into two parts. First, I took four Messianic Jewish believers to meet with key Jordanian partners and pastors who are reaching out to the Syrians.

We had two busy days meeting lots of people and visiting Syrian families. The three Jewish pastors preached in three churches on Sunday. For me it was a great pleasure and honor to introduce my family in Israel to my family in Jordan and be a bridge between them. I believe the Church in Jordan and beyond in the Middle East should be introduced to the Messianic Body in Israel in order to enjoy the unity of the One New Man and to fulfill the Lord's Prayer that we be one.

I believe this might be the first group of Messianic pastors from Israel who ever came to preach in Jordanian churches.

During the second phase of the trip I had six Arab pastors and two Messianic Jewish brothers on the team. We travelled to different places carrying the message of God's love and hope. We were able to purchase more than 225 food bags, 200 baby

formula canisters, 160 bags of diapers, 50 fans, plus other items such as toys and candy for children, hygienic items, kitchen utensils and more. In one city, we visited 20 more families known to Jordanian believers and carried the items to them, sitting with them and hearing their pain and agony. Most of the rented apartments of the Syrians had 10-15 residents each and sometimes more. We shared the message of hope in Christ and prayed for each family.

In addition to visiting many homes in the larger cities, we went in the north of Jordan where we prepared 100 food bags. The church invited 75 Syrian families to come. Ninety four families showed up! We gave out food bags, milk formula, diapers and more.

For three hours, we were giving out what we had—serving the people, hearing their stories and giving them love and hope in Christ.

Now we, the Maoz partners, have an opportunity to bless this team for their next trip, coming up in September.

It costs \$100 a month to feed a couple, and another \$100 per month for two children.

Let us give our Israeli Arab Christians together with Israeli Messianic Jews—all our brothers and sisters in Yeshua—the opportunity to spread the Good News up and down the land of Jordan, caring for the needy and preaching Hope Eternal.

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me;  
Because the Lord hath anointed me  
To bring good tidings unto the humble;  
He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the eyes to them that are bound;  
To proclaim the year of the Lord's good pleasure  
And the day of vengeance of our God;  
To comfort all that mourn.*

*(Isaiah 61:1-2)*

Children are the number one victims of this devastating war in Syria. There are hundreds of thousands of Syrian children who are refugees in Jordan alone.

A new generation is emerging in Syria that is full of fear, killing images, sad stories and more. The U.N. predicts that the crisis in Syria will last for at least 10 more years. What kind of new generation will Syria have?

Please pray for all the Syrian children inside and outside Syria. Pray for God's Spirit to sweep across the Syrian nation. Thank you for your prayers for our future steps in establishing long-term partnerships and ministry presence in Jordan as Arab and Jewish believers from the Land of Israel.

***Shira Sorko-Ram***, along with her husband, Ari, is a co-founder of Maoz Israel Ministries. The couple has pioneered several Messianic Jewish congregations in the Tel Aviv area and sponsored national conferences for the Israeli believers.

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **How You Can Stand Tall at Your Kids' Games**

How do you handle your kids' sports endeavors?

It's a common struggle. Our own ego can be so tied up in our children's performance on the field or the court that we lose the bigger picture of what's really going on.

That's one of the story lines portrayed in the new movie *When*

*the Game Stands Tall*, which opened in late August. It's based on a true story of a high school football team in California, but calling it a "football movie" would sell it short.

There's one dad in the film who is over-the-top. His son is chasing a record that has been in the books for years, and as the season goes on, the father gets more and more obsessed. He's clearly trying to live through his son.

Here's a scene that gives you a glimpse into that father-son relationship. Coach Ladouceur, who is also a teacher at this Catholic high school, is interacting with a player and his father.

One thing this movie definitely got right is how relationships can be changed forever *when we dads go too far* in this area.

Usually, it starts out totally positive: A father encourages his son or daughter to pursue something fun and challenging. Dad gets involved. The child gets encouragement. It's an opportunity for the child to grow and learn some great life lessons, not to mention how it can be a bonding time for the dad and child.

But *all that good stuff goes out the window when we dads cause drama*. We make our children's performance more about *us* than about the child having fun, or developing skills, or any of the other benefits of sports.

Dads, we need to have the right perspective when we take a seat in the stands. I know some guys believe they have every right to evaluate the coaches, the referees or umpires, the cheerleaders, the band, the administrators, and anyone else involved. Maybe that attitude carries over from when they're sitting in a pro sports stadium.

But we must remember that this is different. *These are kids, and it's not about us!* Our attitude should be that we're privileged just to be able to watch our children do something

they enjoy, and we're savoring each moment. They'll be gone before we realize it.

So, I encourage you to see *When the Game Stands Tall*—and do all you can to *not* be like that dad.

What's your approach at your kids' games or competitions? Please join the discussion below.

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

- Make it clear to your child that he or she doesn't have to win in order to earn your love and approval. Say it point blank.
- Go ahead and cheer for your child, but remember, there's a lot more at stake than a win or loss. You have nothing to prove except that you love and support your child—win or lose, home run or strike out.
- Do sports and other kids' activities dominate your family schedule? Is it too much? Have that talk with your kids' mom.
- According to one study of college athletes, there's 6 words they most appreciated hearing from their parents. Not constructive criticism or re-hashing all the plays in the game, but simply: "I love to watch you play." Try it.
- In a letter to little league parents, St. Louis Cardinals manager Mike Matheny encourages parents to be "a silent source of encouragement." Check out his Matheny Manifesto and see if you agree.

**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. We encourage you to help us change the culture of fathering in America by joining the Championship Fathering

*Team.*

*For the original article, visit .*

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## **7 Factors That Could Accelerate Your Teen Daughter's Sexual Activity**

It makes you want to go back to simpler times. The only thing to worry about was her tripping and falling. Those were the days when your little girl sat in your lap and you could make everything better with a kiss. Now you are on the other side of braces. She has blossomed into her teens and boys have come into the picture. She enters the world of dating and your trepidation is palpable.

She is blissfully unaware of what you know well. You know how teenage boys think and feel. You know the emotional entanglement that dating brings particularly when things get physical. A young girl's heart is like a spider web; the more intimate they get, the more of his hand is on it. Teenagers don't have the life experience to know the deep impact of their actions. When he moves on, he pulls his hand off the web leaving it in tatters. Sadly, she may even think of herself as ruined.

The following seven factors increase the likelihood of your daughter being sexually active at a younger age. Knowing these and taking action will help lessen the chance of your daughter engaging in sexual activity in her teen years.

**Alcohol Consumption.** Drinking causes teens to misunderstand

emotions, which clogs clear decision making. Increasing the danger is that getting drunk happens quicker for girls because of their smaller bodies.

**A Strict Home.** You have to let go. Your rules are not going to stop her from making bad decisions. The tighter you try to make your grip, the more she's going to slip through your fingers. More and more secrets will be kept. The focus needs to be trust and consequences. *Example: Not letting her borrow your car because you don't trust her is a consequence to irresponsible behavior.* Have this talk with her now.

**Feeling Disconnected from You.** Cultivate your relationship with her. Spend as much time with her as you can. Ask her out on dates—mid-week has a higher chance of acceptance. Show her genuine care, interest, and affection. Never stop pursuing.

**Divorce.** If you are divorced or contemplating divorce, you need to know this reality. There is no judgment here and it doesn't mean that the situation is hopeless. It just means that you need to be all the more proactive in the other areas of this list, particularly your connection. Work with your ex-wife as best you can.

**No Clear and Effective Communication of Disapproval of Sex Outside of Marriage.** Talk to her about sex. I know it's awkward and she will be uncomfortable. Have your talking points ready, but be as natural as you can be. Talk about the physical risks, but focus on the emotional ones more. Keep it honest and real, but no browbeating. Don't give one big talk and assume that's it. Think of it as a running dialogue.

**Peer Pressure.** They will want to do what their friends are doing. Get to know their friends the best you can. Don't turn a blind eye to the crowd they are rolling in. Ask inquiring questions. A strong sense of identity and bond with your family's core values will help counter peer pressure.

**Sexual Abuse.** As a result, many times young girls' values are

wrongly tied to their sexuality. Your daughter needs a lot of care and professional counseling. If it hasn't been done, you need to contact the authorities and confront the perpetrator. Let her see the full weight of your protection.

Huddle up with your wife tonight and talk about how to discuss sex with your kids.

**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**.

For the original article, visit .

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## **What to Say (And Not to Say) to Couples Struggling With Infertility**

I'm guilty a million times over. It is difficult to see anyone in pain, particularly a loved one. It might be me just wanting them to be OK. It could also be my desire to alleviate the discomfort of awkward silence. Maybe I just want to solve the problem so I can feel important. I want to say something that will make it all right. Some piece of poetic optimism that gives hope and takes the pain away.

At best, it is good intentions gone awry. At worst it is insincere, insensitive and offensive.

One of the most painful things a couple can go through is struggling to get pregnant. It seems like everyone around them is having babies. Having friends that have experienced this heartbreaking road, I know I have said the wrong things. I have learned that these are the things you should never say:

**“Just relax and it will happen.”** First, you don’t know that. Second, you are implying that it is their fault. They must be doing it wrong. You also just brushed off something sacredly painful.

**“Start the adoption process, and you’ll get pregnant.”** Again, you don’t know that. Offering a pithy solution minimizes their situation. They also may not want to adopt.

**“You need to have faith.”** Again, this makes it seem like it’s their fault, except this time you are adding God to the picture. Implying that God is withholding from them because they don’t have enough faith is more than bad theology. It is a subtle slap in the face by communicating that they have not yet earned God’s favor.

**“You should be tested for this ... “** They already know and have been. There isn’t anything that you can recommend that the medical doctors haven’t already told them.

**“Which one of you is the reason?”** This is ultra-sensitive and personal territory. Don’t ask. If they feel that you are close enough friends, they may tell you. If they do, be honored and walk delicately because you are on holy ground.

**“You shouldn’t ... “** Don’t tell them what to do. You do not know more than they do about their situation. You’ve been thinking about it for five minutes. They think about it all the time.

**Do Say:**

**“I’m so sorry. How are you?”** An open-ended question lets them share as much as they feel comfortable. Focusing on their feelings rather than solutions makes them feel cared for.

**“That’s really difficult.”** This lets them know that at some level you understand. You may not have experienced the same thing, but you have had similar feelings of hopelessness and hurt.

**“Thank you for telling me.”** They chose to share something painful with you. Honor their decision and thank them. Let them know how much it means to you that they let you in.

**“I love you.”** You are with them and you care. That’s all they really want.

In what other situation would these same principles apply?

**Editor’s Note:** *My wife and I dealt with infertility issues for nearly four years, and it indeed was painful. We heard every one of the “don’ts” mentioned above, and they get tiresome for a couple who is struggling with this. Click [here](#) to read about our story and how we dealt with it. We now have two beautiful children, Rachel, 12, and Joshua, 10.*

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## **Are Your Dental-Care Products Safe?**

Today, it’s not difficult to take care of your teeth and maintain a gorgeous smile. You can find numerous dental-care products on the market that promise to control tartar, kill germs, control the formation of cavities, and promise sparkling white teeth for all.

However, are you aware of the fact that there are a few ingredients included in your teeth whiteners, toothpastes and mouthwash that can be more harmful rather than advantageous to your teeth? With that said, there are some debatable ingredients included in a few of the oral-care products, and we should use them with caution. These are:

**Triclosan.** It is important to note that the region below the tongue, which is the floor of our mouth, is vascular. It can work as a quick path of absorption to our bloodstream. One of the popular ingredients of toothpaste, Triclosan, promises to work for up to 12 hours in order to prevent the formation of bacterial plaque. However, this ingredient has raised an alarm, since many studies have indicated that it acts as an endocrine disruptor, and in turn, causes hormonal imbalances including thyroid issues and fertility problems. It is also connected to antibiotic resistance.

Recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has conveyed apprehensions regarding this ingredient; thus Johnson & Johnson is planning to remove Triclosan from its soap by 2015.

**Alcohol.** Alcohol is another risky ingredient, which is found in mouthwash. One of the most popular brands of mouthwash contains 20 percent concentration of alcohol. You may not be aware of it, but alcohol dries your mouth and makes your breath worse. Moreover, it makes your teeth more susceptible to cavities because alcohol reduces the natural protection of saliva. Researchers have also indicated some connection between the overuse of alcohol and mouth cancer.

You can easily find lots of good mouthwash products on the market that are free of alcohol. It is suggested buying those that contain zinc since this mineral works to fight the root cause of bad breath.

**Carbamide peroxide.** This ingredient is commonly found in gels, rinses and whitening toothpastes. Urea is the byproduct of

carbamide peroxide, which later converts to ammonia. One should not confuse this ingredient with hydrogen peroxide, which is considered safe to use when used in moderate amounts. Hydrogen peroxide is a better alternative since it breaks down into water and oxygen and, it works faster.

It is easy to get confused with teeth-whitening products. Some people equate the word "whitening" with "bleaching," and they consider that such whitening dental products will work to remove deep stains residing inside the tooth and bring back their sparkling smile.

However, when you read the label of whitening toothpaste, you will notice that it claims to eradicate only the surface stains. This simply means that this product is only working to remove the top layer of stains on the outer enamel, and it is not effective enough to whiten the inside of the tooth. If you really want to get rid of the stains on the teeth, you will need heavy abrasives to scrape away the stains on the enamel surface.

Here, it is essential to know that enamel does not grow back. Thus, if you are looking for effective whitening toothpaste, you should get a professional strength hydrogen peroxide gel tube. You can add this gel on your regular toothpaste every time you clean your teeth. This treatment will surely whiten your teeth from the inside as well as outside.

Doctors suggest brushing your teeth at least twice a day, along with rinsing and flossing. It is also recommended that you see your dentist twice a year in order to keep your teeth and gums healthy.

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*For the original article, visit .*

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## **5 Tips For a Thinner, Healthier You**

We have an excuse for every poor choice we make today: “I had bad parents;” “No one told me the truth;” or “It’s just the way I am.”

The sad fact is we think it will justify our actions. But when it comes to our choices at mealtime, we are finding it’s more about harboring bad habits than an inherited or environmentally stimulated bad behavior.

True, we can inherit poor eating behaviors from our parents or past eating patterns, but we have so many options today to eat healthy. If we want to change where we are going, it starts with the choices we make today. I know there are conflicting words of advice everywhere you turn, and knowing what to do can be complicated. So here is an offering of simple tips to help you make positive health choices.

**1. Start eating at the dinner table.** Our tendency today is to eat on the run, on the couch, or out of a bag. The result is we eat more. Why? Because we are eating whatever is convenient, eating larger amounts, and sometimes we eat directly out of the pots—no portion restrictions—it’s a free-

for-all!

If you take the time to sit at the table, you are more conscious of your portions. You can unwind with the family, not race to get done. Go over the events of the day, and if you like, you'll have the opportunity to put on some background music to make it a more relaxing enjoyable time.

**2. Exchange lunch plates for dinner plates.** This is one I have used many times. When you use a smaller plate, your eyes see more food—it's true! If our eyes *are* bigger than our stomachs, why not fool them? I was brought up with the mindset that you eat everything on your plate because someone somewhere is starving. This led me to eat past the full line, and the result was more calories than I required. So today I use smaller plates and feel full, not stuffed.

**3. Slow down the pace.** Do you find yourself eating just to get something in your stomach? More than likely you eat fast because eating has become a function, not an experience. I can hear it now, "Linda, my life is too hectic for me to experience my food!" Granted, we do live fast-paced lives, but it's the fast-paced eating that is driving us to an early grave.

When we choose to take 15 to 20 minutes to eat a meal, we find ourselves satisfied with less food. Setting your fork down between bites while you savor the flavor of your meal will allow your mind to catch up with your stomach, and the full sensation will be recognized earlier. Taking the time to actually chew your food instead of inhaling it will help in the process as well.

I am the worst at eating for function instead of experience. But I have found that over the years, if I actually think about what I'm eating (not in an obsessive way) and relax as I do it, the digestion process is enhanced as well. Nothing causes an upset stomach like gulping down food on the run.

I guess this means we need to make time, not just take time, to eat. What a concept! Even if you are one of those who chooses to eat smaller meals six times a day, slow down and enjoy it.

**4. Palms up for portion size.** If you set everything in place but choose to pile on the food, you miss the boat altogether. Portion size is the key, and the easiest way to know where to begin and end is to look at your own palm. Opened-faced minus the fingers, this is your portion. Whether we are talking meat, veggies, or bread, this concept will keep us in the ballpark of proper portion size.

Once again, make it fun! When your children are filling their plates (the younger you can get them started the better—of course, use common sense here), remind them to look at their palms and see how close they can get to measuring a portion. Keep in mind that as your children are growing, you don't want to limit their diets as you do adults.

You can use the Palms Up Method with your family and encourage them to place color variety on their plates as well—veggies, salads, lean meats, pastas, sweet potatoes, and, yes, macaroni and cheese even has a place at this setting. Look for balance.

**5. Out of sight, out of mind.** The final step is to remove the temptation of foods that cause you to binge. As the adult, you are in control of what is available in your home for your family to eat. Slowly start to substitute good choices for not-so-healthy ones. Keep fresh fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator. Replace your white bread with one containing whole grains. Limit the amount of salt, sugar, caffeine and alcohol you have on hand.

Encourage healthy living with your younger set by allowing them to help you purge the pantry. Go through things you eat on a regular basis and check the label. If the first ingredient is sugar—out it goes! This might be too shocking to

the “family system,” so take it slow; start with one or two items at first. Purge and then replace with something healthy. Let the kids choose the healthy items. If they are part of the process, they will be more likely to embrace the change.

Small steps to a healthier you are easily accomplished if you keep your eye on the source of your strength. I constantly pull on the sleeve of my Savior Jesus Christ for discernment and direction; He is one guest you should always invite to your table. Happy eating!

**Linda Goldfarb** is a certified physical fitness specialist, speaker and syndicated radio talk-show host. You can download her weekly “Not Just Talkin’ the Talk” radio broadcasts, a one-hour variety talk show based out of San Antonio, Texas, at [. Linda’s show encourages listeners to “walk the walk” spiritually, physically and relationally each and every day.](#)

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## **When the Unexpected Strikes, Go for Plan ‘G’**

Unplanned events such as a major loss, trauma or injury inevitably will occur, often forcing a shift from Plan A to our trusty backup Plan B in life. In the last few days and weeks, we’ve witnessed a horrific compound fracture sustained by NBA great Paul George, the apparent suicide of comic legend Robin Williams, death of actress Lauren Bacall, reported crucifixions and beheadings of Christians in Syria, and on-again, off-again truce between Israel and Gaza.

Remember playing the game Battleship? The opponent would call

out a target such as, “B-10” and we reply with a “Hit” or “Miss.” Well, life has a way of dropping bombs into plans that may challenge our identity, our family, our marriage, professional status and even our faith. Like the game, the bombs hit where it hurts, and we begin to sink.

These are only the newsworthy examples and a board game illustration, but I’m sure in all our lives, something has forced our Plan A to be sidelined so that Plan B could be called in.

We’re not alone. Even Jesus tried to call an audible before going to the cross, asking God for another way, a Plan B (Matt. 26:36-46). But ultimately, like Jesus, we need to resort to the fact there is a much better Plan G—God’s plan.

Typically, our Plan A includes what we want, dreams unfettered. The Plan B is our rescue, fix-it option. But Plan G involves neither of these. Many times, He uses pain in our life for a greater purpose, to draw you closer to him and to do great things in your life. Here’s how to let Plan G reign over your Plan A and Plan B.

**1. Remember, God knows.** No matter the loss, remember that God allowed the traumatic crucifixion of His Son, Jesus, so that those who believe in Him would be saved. God knows pain; He knows your pain.

**2. Relinquish control.** Like Jesus, we have to know when to let go and let God further His plan. You may or may not be surprised by this, but God’s plan for you is good (Jer. 29:11). Tragedy often raises questions in our minds about God’s sovereignty. We may wonder why He would allow this or that to happen, if He’s real and still in charge. Let go of these questions, and just go with Plan G.

**3. Renew your faith.** Our mutual enemy wants us to question everything about God. He wants us to ask “Why bother following a God who would do this?” The Bible tells many stories about

how faith in Jesus led to healing. God's promises are true. He is faithful. It's OK to question God, or even be angry with God, but don't let unplanned events shake your faith. Instead, renew your faith by reading these true stories, and trust that Plan G is the best way.

**4. Reactivate your life.** Rather than resigning from it all, reactivate your life in faith. Do what you can do. Start by asking yourself, "What's my responsibility?" Before Jesus could feed the 5,000 or more, His disciples resigned to telling Jesus that maybe they should send them away for take-out. But the boy did what he could do and brought Jesus some bread and fish. Jesus worked with this act of faith and fed them all, with surplus left over.

You don't have to act like unplanned tragic events don't suck. But there's such a thing as 'sanctioned pain' that God uses for His purposes. By faith, we need to remember God knows our pain, relinquish control, renew our faith, and do what we can.

Plan G involves the knowledge that God is working, and you may not know why until you're in heaven. But that's OK. In fact, it's good, really good.

**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 now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

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