

Why You Need to Rewire Your Evangelism

Jesus is one of the world's best-known brands. More than half the world knows His story to one degree or another. The church also has a brand—a story people tell about it.

In Western culture, the brand of Jesus is maintaining pretty well, but the brand of the church is suffering. Since God desires to bring people to Jesus through the context of the church, this is a problem for our mission.

Artie Davis wrote in his book *Craveable* that when someone introduces themselves as a Christian, what goes through the mind of a person outside the kingdom is often something like this: “Before me stands a judgmental, mean, ignorant, and intolerant person. Why should I listen to anything they have to say?” People perceive that the church has lost its way in the light of public scandals, personal rejection, and spiritual abuse. Our brand is hurting.

It is not possible to concoct a story about the church that is better than what people actually experience in the real world, but it is possible to tell the *right* stories and to tell them well. Part of flooding the online space with God's glory and with the gospel of Jesus is making sure the gospel is given a great deal of attention next to all the other stories being told. This has been our mission since the beginning, and we now have more tools than ever for getting it done.

How can social media save our brand? It can't entirely. If the story people associate with the church, as God's people, is to become a more positive one, it has to begin with our showing genuine love to one another and to the people living in proximity to us. Right now I sense another potential great awakening for the church that is less about creeds and more

about deeds. Church leaders are pressing forward with their congregations to show the gospel and to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us. This is all good, and social media gives us the opportunity to share this story well.

I am not an advocate of compromising the truth as we believe and teach it. When it comes to social issues on which the Bible speaks, we must clearly and boldly side with the Bible. But how we go about standing for truth makes all the difference. In the online world Christians are thought of as intolerant, judgmental, and belligerent about issues of faith and morality. Without changing what we believe, we can certainly change what we emphasize. Right now most of the culture thinks of Christianity in terms of what Christians tend to be *against*.

We have a chance to tell a different story—the story of what we are *for*.

For instance, my wife and I recently met with a staff member from a local pregnancy center called Loving Choices. She gave us some business cards to share with young ladies who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant. I noticed the slogan on the card “No labels. Pro Women.” The words *pro-life* and *pro-choice* incite a fight, but we’re all pro-woman, or should be. It’s a different and perhaps better approach for the gospel’s sake.

What if instead of being *against* gay people, we were *for* the dignity and respect of all people, regardless of sexual orientation? What if instead of being *against* liberals, we were *for* coming to a better understanding of how to help people in need in a way that makes sense? And what if instead of being *against* people with addictions, we were known for being *for* everyone’s recovery?

I love the stories I am hearing right now about the activity of the church in combating human trafficking and slavery, bringing healing to people with AIDS and HIV, working toward

giving every orphan a home, and bringing food and clean drinking water to everyone in the world. These are the stories we must amplify.

I live in suburbia—a neighborhood filling up with new houses in a community filling up with new people. Almost weekly I see in my mailbox a postcard from a church advertising an upcoming event or sermon series. Of course, there's value in designing promotional materials with excellence, but one of the ways we need to be rewired is to return to thinking about our promotional strategy as *creating and engaging the conversation around our church and the message*, which is the gospel.

We have better tools than ever for producing great graphics and nice materials, but at our core we should still give the priority of our thinking to the kind of evangelism that has happened in the church's history with or without the tools that technology affords us.

More than ever we need to keep our passion for Jesus, His truth, His church, new churches, new mission fields, unreached people, uninvolved believers, unforgiven sinners, the least, the last, and the lost. Pretty much everything else can be left behind.

☒ So do some rewiring, dedicate your life to telling the Good News using every means possible, and go be the relational bridge that brings someone into a right relationship with Jesus—even if it does mean jumping on the social media train.

The preceding was adapted from "Rewired" by Brandon Cox, copyright 2014, published by Passio, Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. This book will challenge you not to shy away, but to use social media as a means of sharing the gospel and to do what God intended all along: to be in relationships, have conversations, share our stories, and God's with each other. To order your copy, [click here](#).

Prayer Power for the Week of 5/12/2014

This week ask God to help you be the “hands and feet of Jesus to those around us.” Take part of your prayer time to just worship and seek His face and glory. Open your heart to receive more of His love and presence so that you are able to carry it wherever He leads you. Ask him for divine connections so you can join with others to bring aid to those victimized by recent natural disasters, crime and terrorism. Continue to pray for our leaders, our military and their families, the peace of Jerusalem, the persecuted church, and that believers would unite in prayer and purpose for worldwide revival and the extension of God’s kingdom. Matt. 28:18-20; Ps. 122:6

6 Ways Dads Can Prepare Their Kids for College

What are the keys to your child’s college success? One big key is *you*, dad.

Author and sociology professor W. Bradford Wilcox wrote about this for *The Atlantic*. He wrote, “I find that young adults who as teens had involved fathers are significantly more likely to graduate from college.” And Wilcox provides research results to back that up.

He also lists four benefits of involved fathers that boost children’s educational success:

1. Providing homework help, counsel or knowledge that helps them succeed at school.
2. Helping children steer clear of risky behaviors—from delinquency to teenage pregnancy—that might prevent them from completing college.

3. Fostering a family environment that is generally conducive to learning (characterized by a mix of engagement, affection and supervision).

4. Often, contributing financial support for college.

Wilcox has a lot more about this, which you can read [here](#).

These are important insights for fathers, and today I want to take it a step further and look at *how* we dads can prepare our children for college life and beyond. And this isn't just for dads who have older teenagers. If your children are younger, you can begin preparing them even now.

It isn't difficult to think of the main issues that our kids will be dealing with during those years, and we can start teaching them and challenging them in those areas. We don't need to pressure them to have their lives all mapped out by age 18, but we can instill some key values and skills that will be big benefits to them later in life.

Here are some areas where you can focus your attention, whether you have a child finishing her first year at State U or your oldest is still years away from college:

1. A life purpose. Graduating is a measurable outcome, so I can see why research has focused on it. But if you're like me, your hopes for your child's college career are about more than that. Finishing college is a real accomplishment, but the college experience can include all kinds of life-changing, life-defining experiences. Even at a young age, talk with your child about the fact that jobs may come and go, but how they need a larger driving purpose that helps determine who they want to be and what mark they want to leave on the world.

2. Friends. Young adults entering college should already be very familiar with the importance of peers and the huge difference these choices can make in their lives—and as dads, we should start sending that message as soon as our kids start

school or other organized group activities. The importance of those choices are often magnified when they get to college, where there's no one else to check their choices and where mistakes can have more drastic consequences. And of course, *wise* choices can bring great benefits for years to come.

3. Education. Once again, it's best to get good habits in place at a younger age so that once your child gets to college, it's a natural expectation that they will attend all their classes, study with other good students and use a reliable system for keeping track of assignments and projects. As your child goes to college, reinforce those messages and talk through some specifics about what they can expect.

4. Money management. It's so easy for a college student to get a credit card these days—or two or three. Warn your child about credit; teach him or her to create and live on a budget. At what point in the process, for instance, will she become responsible for all her own expenses? Make all of this very clear as she's growing up, and have a plan to move her in the direction of independence.

5. Life management. Many young adults show up for college unprepared for the realities of studying for classes, living in dorms, scheduling their time and all the daily routines of college life. It's also important to instill an appreciation for proper eating, exercise and sleep habits.

6. Dating and social life. In high schools today, there's plenty of talk about the dangers of drinking, drugs and sex, but some college environments are more like a scene from *Animal House*, or maybe a scene from your own college years. What are appropriate standards and expectations? Schedule a daddy-daughter date or father-son outing to discuss some of this. Help your child commit to a high standard since, once again, compromises in these areas can have far-reaching implications.

So, dad, what are your biggest fears or concerns about the college years? How are you preparing your kids? Please join the conversation below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Help your child come up with a short purpose or mission statement that focuses on a larger goal for his or her life. (Of course, it's a rough draft that they can always adjust later.)
- Think back to things that happened during your college years, and ask your kids some "what if" questions about how they would handle those situations.
- Continue to track with your child's interests and pursuits—especially when they are different from yours. Do some reading and investigating so you can have an intelligent conversation about something they know about and enjoys.
- Talk with your child about the relationship between freedom and responsibility. As one increases, so should the other.
- Help your child connect with and rely on strong support networks outside your family—a campus group, a church, or something similar—as a safeguard against loneliness and depression.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment.

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

New Phone App Can Screen You for Skin Cancer

Have a suspicious mole you'd like to be checked for skin cancer? There's an app for that.

A new iPhone application allows users to take a photo of an unusual growth, run it through an embedded software program, and find out within seconds if it is likely to be cancerous.

The app could offer a quick and inexpensive screening test to millions of people who lack access to medical specialists, *Medical Xpress* reports.

George Zouridakis, a University of Houston professor, created the so-called DermoScan app, now being evaluated for further testing at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. Early testing found the device to be accurate about 85 percent of the time.

In addition to a mobile phone, the technology uses a special magnifying lens, costing about \$500, and provides special illumination of the area being photographed.

"Our research with Dr. Zouridakis on his promising iPhone app will focus on evaluating its use for risk assessment and as a screening tool for early detection of melanomas," says Ana Ciurea, M.D., assistant professor of dermatology at MD Anderson.

"We are in early stages of planning and approval for this project, but such an application, if validated, has the potential for widespread use to ultimately improve patient care."

For the original article, visit .

Obama: 'Confront the Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism'

U.S. President Barack Obama issued a somber warning this week that the "darkest impulses of man" have not been extinguished, calling on Americans to "speak out against rhetoric that threatens the existence of the Jewish homeland."

Obama accepted a humanitarian award from director Steven Spielberg at the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation, a Holocaust museum founded by Spielberg after he made the film *Schindler's List*.

Obama spoke about a variety of global conflicts, including Ukraine, Syria and the kidnapping of more than 200 Nigerian girls by the Boko Haram Islamist militant group.

"We only need to look at today's headlines—the devastation of Syria, the murders and kidnappings in Nigeria, the sectarian conflicts, the tribal conflicts—to see that we have not yet extinguished man's darkest impulses," Obama said.

He expressed alarm, saying that Americans must "confront a rising tide of anti-Semitism around the world," based on events such as a gunman's attack on two Jewish facilities in Kansas and the distribution of pamphlets in eastern Ukraine that demanded the registration of Jews.

"Standing up to anti-Semitism is not simply about protecting one community or one religious group. There is no such thing as 'targeted' hatred," Obama added.

Obama also reiterated his obligation to "sustain America's unshakable commitment to Israel's security."

“The work of this foundation,” he said, “the testimonies of survivors like those with us tonight, also remind us that the purpose of memory is not simply to preserve the past; it is to protect the future.”

The Shoah Foundation’s annual gala featured Bruce Springsteen performing “Promised Land” and “Dancing in the Dark,” and a comedy routine from Conan O’Brien.

At Obama’s table were Spielberg, Barbra Streisand and *Schindler’s List* star Liam Neeson.

For the original article, visit .

4 Meaningful Ways to Honor Your Mother on Mother’s Day

We should honor our moms every day. But since we “officially” get one day out of the year to recognize the woman who changed our diapers, wiped our noses, kissed our skinned knees, sat in the front row of our games, watched us go on our first date, celebrated our wedding day and maybe even watched us have a child of our own, let’s put a little extra effort into it.

Here are 4 meaningful ways to honor your mother on Mother’s Day:

1. Write her a handwritten letter. It’s much too easy to take for granted all the sacrifices our moms made for us over the years. But once you become a parent, you begin to understand the fears, the efforts and the struggles that come with raising kids. So take time to write your mom a letter, thanking her in specific ways and using specific examples of

how she provided for you and loved you through your best days and your worst. Also, be sure to share with her the ways you admire certain aspects of her character so that she feels loved. You should also write the same kind of note to your wife/children's mother and help your younger kids write a letter to her too.

2. Make her a photo album. It's a wonderful way for you to remind your mom, as well as your children's mom, of all the memories you've made together over the years. Collecting pictures into a photo album or scrapbook is an awesome opportunity for you to reminisce on all the family road trips and vacations as well as all the holidays and birthdays celebrated. Your kids can join in to create the album for their mom and grandmother.

3. Create a video. Everyone enjoys watching themselves, their children and their grandchildren growing up and growing together in family videos. Mom is no exception. For her, one of the greatest honors that you can give her is the memories she has and the memories you share. Whether it's shooting a video on your smartphone or editing a bunch of old videos, she'll love it!

4. Cook dinner for her. I've found going out to a public restaurant on Mother's Day a bit challenging because it's so crowded. So, if your mom lives in the same city, send her a special invitation to come over to your house, and cook a special meal for her and your wife with the help of your kids. Give them both flowers and treat them like queens.

Be sure your whole family treats your mom special this Mother's Day with "6 Ways to Help Your Kids Connect With Their Grandparents."

What are some other ways you plan to honor your mom this Mother's Day?

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the

original article, visit .

The Healthy Way to Lose 20 (or 200) Pounds

If you're overweight, it's only a matter of time before your health goes downhill. Research shows those extra pounds could lead to serious illnesses, from heart disease to cancer to diabetes and more.

But some folks are dropping the extra weight and keeping it off, thanks to medically supervised weight-loss programs.

Shedding the Weight

John Blair used to be too heavy to walk comfortably around the block. But now that he's lost 162 pounds, it's easy.

"I feel great," he said. "I feel great about it. It does have results. And that's what's making me feel great."

He's talking about the medically supervised weight-loss program in which he's participating at Virginia's Bon Secours Weight Loss Institute.

Just eight months ago he tipped the scales at a staggering 526 pounds, barely able to squeeze into size 66 jeans. But now those jeans are far too baggy for him to wear.

Blair said he's thrilled to once again be able to climb steps one foot per stair and to have enough energy to rake the yard.

He wants to lose about another 100 pounds in order to reach his goal of 250, the same weight as when he was in the

military.

Supervised Success

The medically supervised weight loss program produces fast results and motivates you to stick with it.

Participants have four meal replacements a day, which means no outside foods at all. The meal replacements used by The Bon Secours Weight Loss Institute are the New Direction Weight Control System.

“They’re powders,” Blair explained. “Some of them form into soups, some are puddings, and some of them are just shakes. And then they do have bars you can substitute one a day. It’s satisfying. It really is.”

Blair is especially glad to have gotten off some of his medications and to have gotten rid of his unhealthy belly fat. After failing with other diets, he hasn’t cheated one bit on this one, not even during the holidays.

“My food was coming,” he recalled. “I knew it was coming. I didn’t have to have the ham and the yams. I didn’t have to have that.”

His supervised weight loss took place under the watchful eye of Dr. Phillip Snider, director of the Bon Secours Weight Loss Institute.

“We check a patient’s lab test,” he explained. “We check a person’s medication list to see if they’re on medications that may be promoting weight gain.”

“So I may suggest medication changes from that aspect,” he continued. “We also look at how their medication needs change during their weight loss because someone on insulin is going to need a much lower dose of insulin. Their blood pressure medicines may decrease.”

Keeping It Off

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reducing your weight by 5 percent is considered “significant weight loss.” This medically supervised program can lead to a 30 percent drop.

“Compare that to bariatric surgery: they may be down 40 to 50 percent of their original weight. So we’re getting changes similar to, not as much as, but similar to bariatric surgery, and people aren’t having to go through the surgery,” Snider pointed out.

Anyone who has ever dieted knows that losing the weight is only half the battle. The other half is keeping it off. One of the keys of the medically supervised weight loss program is accountability.

Participants regularly gather at least weekly to discuss their progress and challenges. Their encouragement and support are invaluable. Then, they keep in touch daily through social media.

They also meet regularly with a dietician, like Barbara Mekkes, to learn how to make good choices once they’re back on real food.

“When people start realizing the role of protein, fats, and carbs in the diet, they get a sense of empowerment,” she said.

Mekkes teaches her clients to avoid sugars, especially high fructose corn syrup. She advises steering clear of starches, like bread.

When it comes to fats, she recommends staying away from hydrogenated oils, also known as trans fats. And she said folks are better off avoiding the highly refined oils like corn, vegetable, and others that make up most of the oil aisle at the grocery store.

On the other hand, Mekkes said some saturated fats, like coconut oil, are healthy, as are the natural oils like olive oil. But she warned not all olive oils are the same.

Since its popularity has taken off, some olive oils contain highly refined materials. To know whether yours is good, Mekkes suggests placing it in the refrigerator. A good olive oil will turn cloudy after it's been in there a few hours.

"I encourage people as much as possible to go to the expeller pressed or cold-pressed fats," she added. "Those are more fats that are straight from the origin."

The Right Amount

Even if you're eating healthy food, you can still gain weight by eating too much of it. That's where a "portion plate" comes in handy.

It's an actual plate that's divided into sections indicating what to eat and how much of it. That way, participants in the program train themselves to eat the right amount.

And the right amount isn't just important when it comes to food. Getting the right amount of sleep also can make a difference.

"We've talked several times about how sleep, how you're producing ghrelin in your stomach," Blair said. "If you don't get enough sleep, the ghrelin takes over and that makes you hungry. Things like that I never knew before."

Snider also recommends his patients wear a "fitness tracker" on their wrist, which reminds the wearer to stay active.

"A lot of them will send your smart phone a text message when you've been still for more than an hour," he explained. "(It will) tell you 'time to get up and move.' Some of them will give you a vibrating alarm when it's time to get up and move."

A Longer, Healthier Life

Finally, there's the emotional component – what was behind the weight gain in the first place.

“A lot of people do have a food addiction or they turn to food during times of stress or anger or boredom,” Snider explained.

“And so our goal is to try to teach people alternative ways to get that relaxation, the break from the stress, maybe some of the relief from the boredom in other ways besides turning toward food,” he said.

So whether you have 20 pounds to lose, or more than 200 pounds like Blair did, a medically supervised weight loss program may be just what you need for a longer, healthier life.

7 Things for Which to Thank Your Wife

We men can be notoriously bad at thanking people, starting with the person we love the most: our wife. Here are seven quick things we can thank our spouse for, one per day for the next week:

1. “Thanks for putting up with me and for loving me. I know I am not always easy to live with.”
2. “Thanks for all you do to provide good food for our family to eat.”
3. “Thanks for all you do around the house. You do a great job keeping things clean and organized.”

Sneezing, Wheezing and the Cortisol Connection

Trees are budding. Spring is in the air. And so is pollen. Is it affecting you? Over 50 million Americans suffer from hay fever, making it the sixth most common chronic illness.

The root cause of your sniffles, sneezes, watery eyes, itchy nose, scratchy throat or draining sinuses may be a little-known factor.

Most allergic reactions are a sign of an imbalanced immune system. An overreactive or overly sensitive immune system can result in weakened adrenal glands. Allergic reactions involve the release of histamine and other pro-inflammatory substances.

Cortisol, released by the adrenal glands, is a primary anti-inflammatory agent. The amount of cortisol circulating in the blood is a key factor in controlling inflammatory reactions in the body. Cortisol is secreted as part of the anti-inflammatory response. It helps prevent reactions like keeping your eyes from swelling shut due to allergies. Healthy adrenal function plays an important role in histamine release and inflammatory reactions that cause allergic reactions.

When the adrenals are fatigued, they are less likely to produce enough cortisol to adequately counteract inflammatory reactions. Allergy symptoms can flare up and make us miserable.

Have you noticed that when you are more stressed, your allergic reactions are worse? People going through times of adrenal fatigue often experience worse symptoms. When more

histamine is released, it takes additional cortisol to control the inflammatory response. This pushes the adrenal glands harder than ever. The more they have to work, the more fatigued they can become, and the less cortisol they produce. Elevated histamine levels inflame the tissues even more. A destructive cycle is set in motion that can lead to deepening adrenal fatigue and more severe allergic reactions.

To break this cycle, it is imperative to give your adrenal glands the support they need. This is far better than simply manipulating your body with antihistamines. Supporting your immune system and adrenal glands helps you get to the root of the problem.

What you can do right away:

- Juice lots of vegetables and include plenty of ginger root—it's an anti-inflammatory agent
- Don't drink coffee or anything else with caffeine—this whips tired adrenals, forcing them to work when they need to rest
- Get plenty of sleep—seven to nine hours a night
- Eat adequate protein
- Take extra vitamin C with bioflavonoids
- Take adrenal support supplements
- Reduce stress—take a break, decompress, schedule times to relax, meditate, pray

If you've been struggling with allergies, keep in mind that you may need to address your adrenal gland health. You may also need to identify foods your body is sensitive to, such as wheat (gluten), dairy, corn, soy or sweets. When your body is sensitive to certain foods you eat, you will also react more intensely to pollens and grasses. And make sure you de-stress your life as much as possible. You may be quite encouraged with the improvements you see in your health.

Cherie Calbom, M.S., C.N., is the author of 24 books,

including The Juice Lady's Remedies for Allergies and Asthma, The Juice Lady's Remedies for Stress and Adrenal Fatigue, The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies and Juicing, Fasting and Detoxing for Life. She has devoted her life to teaching people how to care for their bodies so they might complete their destiny. For more information, visit her at .

Taking the Hit for Your Children

"Kenny, it's Bill.

"Hey, Bill. What's going on?"

"Listen, Kenny. Do you have a minute? I need to ask you a question about something."

Pause.

"Absolutely. Fire away." I said.

That was a lie. A truthful response would have been, "No, I don't have a minute or another second. I just finished a board meeting. I am under titanic pressure at the moment to finish this project, and I am getting frustrated over all the interruption!"

That was my reality, but I wasn't going to make Bill suffer for what he didn't know. I love the guy. So I didn't let on about my reality for Bill's sake and just swallowed my angst. After I mentally placed my precious schedule on the altar, Bill shared with me what's giving him a spiritual fever.

"I led a group of junior high boys last year for church," he continued. "All five are signed up again for this year's group and they want me to be their leader again. The church promised I would have a co-leader to help out, but I just found out it's going to be just me. Should I say yes anyways? Brian [Bill's eighth-grade son] told me he really wants me to lead it, but I want to make sure I am doing it with the right motives and not out of obligation. I have so much going on with work right now."

While Bill is telling me what's troubling his soul, I am reflecting on a conversation I just finished—with God. Sixty seconds earlier, I had just finished praying about a little kerfuffle of my own, saying, "Lord, would you help me to find a good story about what it means to sacrifice that will relate to men? I want Your story." I had just written down the word *sacrifice* on a piece of paper. Next to it I wrote, "To suffer loss; to give up; or to renounce for an ideal, a belief, or an end." God has a sense of humor. Bill couldn't see me, but I was shaking my head with a big smile on my face as he presented his dilemma.

My interpretation of Bill's issue: "I am maxed out as it is, and I need some margin in my life." I can relate to Bill, but I am also thinking of the bigger picture, of his duty and how all men must, in the words of Andrew Jackson, "pay the price to secure the blessing."

It's the blessing piece that I didn't want Bill to miss which means somehow I had to give him the news his feelings didn't want to hear but that his faith needed to hear. It was clear he was looking for some affirmation to do what he knew he needed to do—to sacrifice his own comfort for the sake of his son and those boys. I was truly impressed with Bill and his relationship with his son. When I was in eighth grade, letting my dad leak all over my friends on a weekly basis would have been second choice only to being caught in a public place with only my underwear on. I thought to myself what a gift this was

and how rare an opportunity this could be. I didn't hold back.

"First of all, that's amazing that eighth-grade boys want to charge the hill with you—again! That says a lot about you," I said. "More importantly, think about five years from now, when Brian is graduating from high school and leaving to go start life as an adult. Picture yourself sitting in the stands with Carol, who will be bawling, and you are looking down at Brian and his buddies walking into the stadium in their cap and gowns, listening to the back play processional. Standing there, look back at this moment and ask yourself: Was it worth what you gave up in personal time and effort to lead your son and a group of boys spiritually for that year back in eighth grade?"

Bill was quiet for a few seconds, and then I heard him inhale. The exhale sounded like this: "I never regret it, you know. In fact, afterwards, I feel great. I needed to hear those words."

He made some extra comments about how he thinks through what's going to happen each week, how he plans fun, studies the Bible and thoughtfully prepares his discussion time with the boys so that it is meaningful. He was talking himself into it.

For practical purposes, I just disappeared and began to observe how Bill's thirst for real significance was overtaking his fear of the cost. He had to determine for himself what was worthwhile before committing himself to sacrifice for it. And as he did, he didn't need me.

It seems duty as God's man deconstructed the "dilemma" into no dilemma at all. The negatives were gone. Sacrifice had now morphed into a positive duty, creating a more positive perspective. He had worked it through in his mind and considered his feelings, but now the reluctance was gone.

His reasoning: A decision for himself would have died with him. Instead, the sacrifice he made for God and his son will remain and be immortal.

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 .

How to Walk Your Way to Creativity

We've all experienced it: the flood of "feel good" brain chemicals that accompanies an intense workout and the elevation of our mood that lingers long after we leave the gym. Very rarely do we finish up a run, a sports game or any other kind of high-intensity exercise and think, *Well, now I really feel lousy! Better not do that anymore!*

God made our bodies to move and to run and to jump and to lift. When we do, we reap a host of benefits, including reduced stress levels, decreased risk of disease, healthier hearts and stronger bones, to name a few. But another exercise advantage has nothing to do with the way we look or feel, but the way we think, and more specifically, how well we think *creatively*.

A recent Stanford University study found that taking a brief stroll can significantly increase creativity. For millennia, artistic types—poets, painters, musicians and actors—have claimed that some of their best ideas are developed during the course of a relaxing walk. But so far, there has been no

scientific evidence to back this up.

“Me thinks that the moment my legs begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow.” –Henry David Thoreau

“I would walk along the *quais* when I had finished work or when I was trying to think something out. It was easier to think if I was walking and doing something or seeing people doing something that they understood.” –Ernest Hemingway

Doctor Marily Oppezzo, at the time a Stanford graduate student, recruited a group of undergraduate students and made it her mission to spark their creativity within the confines of a drab, dim, uninspiring room that featured only a desk and a treadmill. She asked the students to complete tests of creativity, which might involve tasks such as coming up with unusual uses for a button. Then the participants walked on the treadmill at a comfortable pace of their choosing. As they walked—facing a blank wall, I might add—the students repeated the creativity tests, which took about eight minutes.

The creativity of nearly every student increased significantly when they walked. Dr. Oppezzo reported that most were able to generate about 60 percent more uses for an object, and noted that their ideas were both “novel and appropriate.”

Challenged to see in what other contexts creativity could be unleashed, Dr. Oppezzo moved portions of the experiment outside. You’d assume the great outdoors would produce even greater results, wouldn’t you? But surprisingly, this study showed that students became just as creative by walking inside the dreary classroom as when they were outside strolling through the verdant university campus.

Dr. Oppezzo remarked that “it really seems that it’s the walking that matters,” in terms of spurring creativity. A pretty setting is just the cherry on top.

How a casual walk can alter our various mental processes is

still unclear, but Dr. Oppezzo hypothesizes that the improved mood gained by walking may cause creativity to bloom more easily. Another possibility is that walking may divert energy that would otherwise be spent stifling creative thought. (Perhaps stifled by watching TV or remaining glued to a smartphone?)

This research may not reveal anything shocking or revolutionary, but it does give scientific credence to the power of walking that many innovative and imaginative people have lauded for ages.

The fact is, all of us get stuck in mental mire. We all have watched our trains of thought go screeching off the rails, and we've all felt a thick, nearly palpable fog settle over our minds. It's encouraging to know that the next time your brain encounters a barrier, all it may take to break through it is an easygoing walk to clear your head.

"For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever" (Mic. 4:5, ESV).

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