

No Shortcuts: A Journey From Fat to Fit

I first met Heidi Luong, 35, a year and a half ago, the night I spoke at her San Antonio church on the subject of faith-driven fitness. After my talk, she graciously asked, with her trademark smile, if I would autograph her copy of my book *Fit for Faith*.

She proceeded to express her growing love for a strength and conditioning program called CrossFit and that she was even considering becoming a certified CrossFit coach. I invited her to come try a class or two at my and my husband's box and thought to myself as she walked away, *I bet she'd make a great coach*.

A year and a half later, I am blessed to be able to train alongside Heidi and call her both a CrossFit coach and a sister in Christ. We've all heard of "Proverbs 31 Women," but I believe Heidi is a "1 Thessalonians 5:23 Woman" too—she desires for the minds of her CrossFit sisters and brothers to be as strong as their muscles and their prayer life as vibrant as their gym life, and she prays that they be "preserved complete" in spirit, soul and body. Heidi can be regularly found pushing her athletes to lift, press, carry and swing challenging weights and genuinely, effortlessly encourages them to give any heavy spiritual burden over to the Lord, all in the same one hour of class time.

Heidi's passion stems from her own past struggles. All of our athletes at CrossFit 925 are shocked when they hear about her former weight battle and aversion to exercise of any kind and often exclaim "Nuh-uh!" when she tells them she once weighed over 200 pounds. But Heidi's journey was entirely real, her transformation truly astounding, and her heart to help others 100 percent a product of her past and the illuminating lessons

she courageously claimed from within it.

I want to thank Heidi for agreeing to be featured in this article and do the following interview with me. Doing so required no small measure of bravery, humility and willingness to be completely vulnerable in hopes that something she shares will strike a chord within each of you reading and remind you of the promise that with God, nothing is impossible.

Diana: Heidi, when did you start to gain the weight, and what, if anything, triggered it?

Heidi: I started to gain weight around my mid-20s, right after I married. It was that “first-20-pounds-of-comfort newlywed weight.” We used dinner and a movie as our go-to activity together. Then two years in, I became pregnant and gained 20 “extra” pounds.

I had every intention of losing the weight right after I had my first child. But, surprise! While nursing, I got pregnant again! So I did what I did best to feel “good”: I ate ice cream every night.

Remaining inactive and using pregnancy as an excuse to not work out, I shoved getting healthy to the back burner of my priorities list and focused on other hobbies and staying at home with my two beautiful babies. And I gained even more. At my son’s first birthday I was at my heaviest and was completely depressed every time I looked in the mirror.

Diana: What was the catalyst that inspired you to start making changes to lose the weight?

Heidi: Hearing the doctor say I was not only overweight, but also obese and pre-diabetic. Shortly thereafter, we read a verse in one of my Bible study classes about how our bodies are temples for the Lord and we honor Him when we take care of ourselves. I thought about how tired I always felt and how I knew I wanted to serve Him and my family but never had any

energy.

I reached an emotional low and was desperate to lose weight. I remember having to choose between a gym membership or buying a treadmill. My husband had encouraged me to join a gym and reluctantly (because I didn't want anyone to see me), I found one to join that was close to home, offered childcare and was affordable. I asked my husband to take my "before" picture because I was *extremely* motivated and knew that I was going to get healthy again.

Diana: What did you change in your daily life?

Heidi: I exercised regularly. I spent the first couple of months doing my own workout, which consisted of walking on the treadmill and using the elliptical machine while watching TV. But I began to notice that all of the in-shape people had personal trainers. I knew I needed help knowing how to lose weight *the right way*, but I didn't have the money to get a trainer.

After sharing my dilemma, my in-laws bought me two months of training. I immediately started losing weight and realized the value in the information and help I was receiving. I was a sponge and actually took a night job to continue to afford two more months of training.

The trainer had me working out five days a week: two cardio-only days and three strength and cardio days. He kept bumping up my intensity as I started to handle more and more.

It was always a challenge and never comfortable. I learned firsthand about DOMS [delayed onset muscle soreness].

Diana: Can you talk a bit about your nutrition and what healthy swaps you made and any tips/tricks you incorporated to make losing a little easier?

Heidi: My trainer had me cut calories and limited what I was

eating to six clean, small meals a day. To my surprise, I never felt deprived or hungry. I lost about one to two pounds a week. It seemed like a slow progress, but I stuck with it and continued to make more progress and got stronger little by little.

My sister noticed my progress and was motivated to get back in shape after having her first baby. She told me she was going to start running and was going to sign up for a half marathon. I was so excited to be an inspiration to someone. In true older-sister style, she also informed me that I was going to be training with her. I thought she was crazy to try to run that far—and on purpose—and that I would agree to do it with her. But I did!

I asked my gym if they had a running group, but they didn't. So we started our own, and within a month, I truly fell in love with my running time. I soon started to run as many races as I could—5Ks, 10Ks, the half and even a full marathon. I started subbing and then teaching fitness classes, like step class, swim aerobics and boot camp classes.

Diana: What eventually led you to CrossFit?

Heidi: I was told by a spine specialist after my marathon that I wasn't allowed to run long distances on pavement because the repetitive impact was exacerbating a hereditary condition I have. I started searching for an alternate workout to maintain my new healthy attitude and lifestyle. I tried a few Zumba classes, Yoga, MMA, kickboxing, boxing, Krav Maga self-defense, and finally CrossFit, which I immediately fell in love with.

Diana: How long did it take you to drop the weight, and was it hard to keep it off? Were you tempted to slip into old habits again?

Heidi: It took me a year and a half to lose all the weight. I was tempted to start overeating again (old habits die hard),

but I had to learn not to turn to food to fill an emotional or spiritual void. I'm still tempted to cheat now and then, but I've learned to change my outlook on food. I allow myself the grace to know I will be eating tiramisu for my birthday and it will all be OK. All things in moderation.

I've also learned that if I go crazy and throw caution to the wind with greasy, fattening or super-sugary food these days, I feel horrible. I am more aware and in tune with what my body needs over what it seems to want. Taking a moment to analyze why and what I am about to eat is sometimes all it takes to make a better choice.

Diana: What were the benefits of losing weight? And what was the best part?

Heidi: Some benefits of losing weight have been an increase in energy. I feel great about the accomplishment of sticking with my goal. I feel great about how I look, my kids get to see discipline and hard work paying off, and I love inspiring others that knew me at my heaviest and being an example and encouragement that you really can do all things in Christ who gives you strength.

Diana: How has your past as being an overweight person bettered you as a health professional?

Heidi: I feel like I can empathize with those trying to reach their personal goals, and it motivates me to encourage them through their doubt.

Diana: What is your advice to anyone reading who thinks losing weight and keeping it off is nearly impossible for them? What do you think their first step should be?

Heidi: My advice is to take it one step at a time. Make very specific and small, doable goals. Don't get overwhelmed and defeated if you don't reach your goal in a short amount of time. It took time to gain that weight; it will take time to

lose it. Two months is not a long time when it comes to losing weight. Expect to lose only one to two pounds a week with healthy changes. But you'll notice it will stay off if you keep up your new healthy habits.

Don't be afraid of gaining lean muscle. Muscle burns fat faster.

Don't obsess over the scale. Muscle weighs more than fat. There will be weeks if you're working out that the scale will not budge. You know you made progress—believe in that.

My advice for what to do first is to make a list of your goals and then everything you think that is getting in the way of your goals. Then work on praying over those things and finding a way to overcome any negative thoughts and excuses. Also start with changing what you eat. Seventy percent of losing weight starts with what you put into your body regularly. Make it clean, mostly lean, natural and properly portioned out.

Lastly, know you are worth the time, money and investment it takes to reach your goal! God loves you and made you with an intent and purpose. Our days here are numbered. Let's give Him thanks for this gift of life and bless and honor Him with a healthy life full and ready for the adventure He sets before us.

Stay fit, stay faithful.

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness* and her latest book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [www.dianataylor.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at *CrossFit 925*. Diana can be reached on *Twitter*.

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

How to Diffuse Emotional Bombs

At Every Man Ministries, we know men because we are men. We talk about real-life stuff. Tough stuff. Embarrassing stuff. Challenging stuff. We know the deal.

There's one issue that doesn't get much air time, but every man struggles with it to varying degrees. And every man probably deals with it differently. Once it's unleashed, chaos reigns. The enemy has fire to fuel, and he applies liberally. Relationships get torn while sin is born.

Anger.

Some men rage; others suppress. Some shout; others pout. Some get aggressive, others passive aggressive. Some men throw a fit; others get physically fit. Some men ignore it; others embrace it. But one thing is for sure: If you don't control anger, anger will control you. It's madness on the march, trampling anything in its path.

We would all agree that getting angry rarely solves anything. But Jesus explains the seriousness of it in Matthew 5:21. From the Message translation, check this out:

"You're familiar with the command to the ancients, 'Do not murder.' I'm telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder.

Anger fact: It seldom exists at the level at which you finally express or see it. It's deeper. God knows this, and He revealed where anger is birthed: in the heart and mind.

In Genesis 4:3-12, the Bible gives a case study on anger and

its consequences. God was not pleased with Cain's offering, and it ticked Cain off. Why? Because Cain's offering did not come from the heart; he was just going through the motions. Cain wasn't mad at God. He was mad at himself and jealous of his brother. Instead of taking his problem to God and being honest with himself, he loosed his anger and committed murder:

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Gen. 4:6-7, NIV).

In this passage, God says not to let anger master you. Do the right thing. If you don't—and here's the big warning—Satan capitalizes on the opportunity. It's much easier to lie to an angry man (and get him to do something he'll regret) than a man who has his emotions under control.

God says to Cain and to every man who will listen: "You must master your emotions." Easier said than done! But the key is getting right with God.

To get a grip on anger, first recognize there are—and will always be—a stimulus, a trigger and fuse. Then there's a reaction—that's the jumping-off point—followed by a consequence.

Fortunately, the Bible gives the math for dealing with anger:
Quick + Slow + Slow

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19).

How to Diffuse Emotional Bombs

Conflict is inevitable; destruction is optional. You're not going to stop triggers that fuse bombs, but you don't have to

light them. The goal is to stop reacting and start responding. When you feel the fire burning and the pot is about to boil over, follow these steps:

1. Press pause. Don't escalate or retaliate. Fight for a pause. Agree to take a few minutes before responding. If you don't, the problem will get magnified. So between the stimulus and your response, distract yourself. Take out the trash. Do the dishes. Take a deep breath. In fact, take 10 of them. Count to 10 slowly. Settle down. When madness is on the march, you can slow that train down if you deal with it early, honestly and humbly.

2. Talk and walk. Just pray and say James 1:19. Saying Scripture is praying. Ask God for help, being honest with your feelings of frustration and weakness. Confession is a sign of strength! Walk in the Spirit by asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom and to guide your steps in the coming conversation. Think of God as your heavenly Father who is eager to give His advice and send help. You have to fight fire with fire, and the Holy Spirit is a holy fire.

3. Turn and take. Turn inward and take ownership of your part in the conflict. Understand God's desire in moments of disagreement. His desire is for us to seek and own the truth about ourselves. Are you willing to look at yourself, unlike Cain was? What's your part? When we own it, we diffuse it. The quickest way to douse the flame is to take responsibility for yourself and your own actions.

4. Discover the driver. In the process, between stimulus and response, you will discover something: The problem doesn't exist at the level you see it. It's just coming out as anger. The real issue, the deep-down driver, is probably related to pride. If you can put a lid on your pride, honestly ask God for His presence, and humbly submit to His Spirit, then you will find a desire to please God, not yourself. Remember to operate from a place filled with grace and truth. Then you can

speak and respond to the situation.

5. Resolve to resolve. Now you're ready. But your intent must be to seek understanding, not squash it. Be quick to listen, not speak. Seek to please God instead of winning the fight. Resolve to resolve. Making peace may be easier than you think, and that's what will please God.

"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 'In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold" (Eph. 4:25-27).

God has a purpose in disagreement—to discover the real truth driving the emotion. Things, circumstances and other people may trigger anger, but they are not driving it.

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 .

Israeli Catholic Leaders: Christians, Secular Muslims

Suffer From Extremist Attacks

Christians, along with secular Muslims and others, are suffering at the hands of extremists in the Middle East, according to Catholic leaders in Israel.

In a communique issued by the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries in the Holy Land, Catholic leaders said that the repeated references by people in the West to the persecution of Christians may “play into the hands of extremists” whose “aim is to sow prejudice and hatred, setting peoples and religions against one another.”

“There is no doubt that the recent upheavals in the Middle East, initially called the Arab Spring, have opened the way for extremist groups and forces that, in the name of a political interpretation of Islam, are wreaking havoc in many countries, particularly in Iraq, Egypt and Syria,” the communique says.

“There is no doubt that many of these extremists consider Christians as infidels, as enemies, as agents of hostile foreign powers or simply as an easy target for extortion,” it adds.

But the Catholic leaders pointed out that Christians are not the only victims of such extremism, with secular Muslims and others being targeted as well.

“Secular Muslims, all those defined as ‘heretic,’ ‘schismatic’ or simply ‘non-conformist’ are being attacked and murdered in the prevailing chaos,” they say.

The Catholic leaders also say Christians and Muslims need to stand together and rely on each other because “the outside world will not make any real move to protect us.”

“Together, we must seek out all those who dream as we do of a

society in which Muslims and Christians and Jews are equal citizens, living side by side, building together a society in which new generations can live and prosper," the leaders say.

For the original article, visit .

The Sunshine Nutrient: Why Vitamin D Is Key

One of the best things we can do for our health, and one of the easiest, is the very thing that most Americans are not doing: getting enough vitamin D.

Vitamin D is crucial for fighting disease. A lack of it can lead to serious health problems.

We get vitamin D from the sun, from some foods and from supplements. But despite its abundant availability, an estimated two-thirds of Americans aren't getting enough.

That spells real trouble.

A major new study of nearly 1 million people finds the lower your vitamin D levels, the higher your risk for certain diseases, including the following:

- A 35 percent increased risk of death from heart disease
- A 14 percent increased risk of death from cancer

Vitamin D is nicknamed 'the sunshine nutrient' because it's produced in our bodies when skin is exposed to sunlight.

To get enough vitamin D from the sun, doctors recommend exposing as much unprotected skin as possible—so no sunscreen,

spread out over as little as one to two hours a week.

But remember, in order to guard against skin cancer, make sure you don't overdo your sun exposure. If your skin turns pink you've been out too long.

If you can't, or don't want to, get your vitamin D from the sun, some foods are rich in it, such as salmon, mushrooms, fortified dairy and kale.

But even those items might not contain all the vitamin D you need, according to nutrition specialist Dr. Jana Klauer.

"Food sources are really limited, so it's best for most people to take a supplement," she said.

Choose vitamin D-3. It makes your heart healthy, improves your immune system, boosts your mood, and since you need it to absorb calcium, it strengthens your bones.

But beware: even if you take vitamin D, certain things lower it from your system, such as smoking, obesity and inflammation, which comes from things like eating too much sugar and trans fats.

For the original article, visit .

What Do Your Kids Want to Learn From You?

One of the main goals of my blog is to encourage and challenge readers to make the most of every opportunity they have with their children, because our time with them is fleeting.

They grow up so fast, and before we know it they're moving out and getting on with their lives. Also, it's sobering but true: None of us have a guarantee that we'll be here tomorrow. You never know when something tragic could happen.

I'm not telling you all this to bring you down, but to remind you how important it is to have your priorities straight. It's too easy to get caught up in the busyness of life and coast along.

A while back, I heard about a great idea from a committed father named Bob—a way to be purposeful about the time he has left with his three sons at home. Part of living out that commitment includes leading regular family meetings, where everyone has a chance to talk about what's going on and share any concerns they may have.

One day Bob came to the family time with this exercise: Each of the boys had to come up with five things they wanted to learn before they leave home. Bob and his wife came up with five things they thought their sons needed to learn as well.

By the next meeting, the boys had listed things like how to fix various things on the car, how to manage their time, how to find a job, how to cook eggs and French toast and how to fix or replace a faucet.

What would your kids say? Maybe it's time to ask.

I know teenagers often act like they already know everything, but eventually all kids realize that they don't. They'll leave home one day, and there's a lot of information and skills they'll need if they're going to do well on their own.

A big part of our job is coaching them now as we prepare them for that time. There are hundreds or even thousands of things our children need to see and do and learn, and as dads, we're in the best position to teach them many of those things. It's a never-ending task, so we need to get started.

So, your No. 1 action point for today is to follow Bob's lead and ask your kids what they want to learn from you. Start with five things for now—you can always add to them later—or start a new list once you have the first one checked off.

It's a great exercise to help get some specific goals in front of you for each of your kids. And it might help you keep them as a high priority and make the most of every opportunity you have with them.

I'll also mention that there are several helpful books that go hand in hand with today's topic, and you might want to check them out: *1001 Things Your Kids Should See and Do (or Else They'll Never Leave Home)* and *1001 Things Every Teen Should Know Before They Leave Home (or Else They'll Come Back)*.

What are the most important things you've taught your children—and what do they still want to learn from you? Please tell us in the discussion section below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Talk with your children's mother about an age-appropriate goal or skill for each of your children to learn (and for you to work on with them) during the next month—tying shoelaces, doing dishes, mowing the grass, finding useful information on the Internet, checking the air in the car's tires, etc.
- Give your children a glimpse of your budget and regular bills you pay so they gain a better understanding of how much it costs just to keep the lights on and food in the pantry.
- No matter what your child's age, recruit him or her to assist you this weekend as you take care of a routine home maintenance task.
- Help your kids find authors that they love to read.

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 .

Raising Autism Awareness: Early Diagnosis Crucial

Autism was virtually unheard of just a generation ago. Now the number of children being diagnosed with it is skyrocketing, prompting questions of what's behind the increase and what parents need to know.

Children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) behave abnormally, from mild social awkwardness to a severe inability to communicate. According to the Center for Disease Control, the number diagnosed with ASD jumped from 1 in 150 seven years ago to 1 in 88 two years ago to 1 in 68 today.

While the increase is alarming, it's at least in part due to increased awareness.

The CDC's Colleen Boyle says doctors may be "getting better at identifying these children."

Boys are five times more likely to be autistic than girls. The average age of diagnosis is four.

But autism advocates say it's better to catch ASD by age 2 because the earlier children are diagnosed and enrolled in training programs, the greater their success in the long run.

"Diagnosis might happen at two or four or five or eight, but people live with autism throughout their entire lives," Liz

Feld, president of Autism Speaks, told CBN News.

Since there's no physical way to test for autism, such as a blood test, a diagnosis is based on the child's behavior. Parents should see a qualified physician, preferably a pediatric neurologist, if their child isn't reaching key developmental milestones.

For example, by age 1 a child should be pointing and trying to say words. A complete list of how your child should be behaving at what age is on the CDC website under the header "Learn the Signs, Act Early."

Researchers still don't know what causes autism, but the latest findings show it begins during pregnancy.

According to research conducted by the University of California and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the brains of autistic children begin to develop abnormally in the second or third trimester. What causes that disruption is unclear.

Some theories point to genetic factors, combined with external ones, such as illness during pregnancy, an older father, trans fats or environmental toxins.

Scientists are cautious not to speculate because for years some theorized that childhood vaccines caused autism, a claim that most scientists now say was false.

Lorie Johnson is CBN News' medical reporter. For the original article, visit .

Why You Should Embrace a Physical Challenge

I've stated often that working out repeatedly sets the stage for faith-building parables to unfold in my life. Ever since my initial struggle with anorexia as a teen, the Lord has spoken to me about the sanctity of my body as a temple.

He also has spoken to me about the importance of patience, self-discipline and self-control; the necessity of pain in order to stimulate growth; and the power of encouragement from the mouths of other believers through the symbolism of proper physical nourishment, challenging exercise and the people who push us to keep pursuing both. The last five weeks at my and my husband's CrossFit gym, CrossFit 925, have provided yet another source of spiritual inspiration.

The 2014 CrossFit Open has just ended. For those of you unfamiliar with CrossFit, the annual Open is a five-week competition for CrossFitters around the world. For some, the goal is to qualify for the regional and ultimately compete at the CrossFit Games in California this summer. For most, however, the competition is a simple invitation—that is, a challenge to complete each workout and test the strength, speed, stamina and endurance we've accumulated thus far in our CrossFit journey.

This year, our box (CrossFitspeak for *gym*) hosted its second Open. Each Friday evening for five weeks, roughly 40 of our athletes had CrossFit “troubles come [their] way” (to quote Saint James) in the form of workouts that presented skills, such as double-unders, that they'd never performed before, weights they had never lifted before and mental barriers they'd never crossed before.

Every workout posed unique challenges to each individual

athlete. For some, it was the aforementioned double-under, in which the jump rope must pass underneath the feet two times per jump. For others it was performing 15 135-pound deadlifts ... followed by 20 155-pound deadlifts ... followed by 25 185-pound deadlifts. I think you get my point; the Open was a virtual marathon of Herculean tasks—a marathon, however, that was not without its grand rewards waiting at the finish line.

All of our athletes faced the Open with optimism and excitement. Fully aware that the road would be long and arduous, rife with steep hills and deep ruts, they ran the race with perseverance, poise and infectious positivity. Even during workouts in which movements were prescribed that some deemed impossible to perform at their current fitness level, they gave it their all.

Some even did double-unders for the very first time, then abruptly squealed with surprise and danced for joy, invigorated by the surprise of their newfound skill. Indeed, many other “impossible” feats were accomplished that would have remained buried by fear, doubt and pessimism had the phrase “I can’t” been uttered and the white flag (or gym towel) raised before the workout began.

A few days ago, I judged and cheered for one of our athletes who, despite being a marathon runner, still declared the final Open workout to be one of the most intimidating physical challenges she’s ever faced. Suffice it to say, she was *not* stoked about doing it!

But after 41 minutes and 12 seconds, she was done. As soon as she took a seat on the floor, her two young sons, Colby and Riley, jumped down from their perch atop our plyometric boxes and raced over to their mama, whom they pounced on and covered with congratulatory kisses. Rachel texted me later, saying:

“I met my ultimate goal, which was to get one score in each WOD [workout of the day]. I’ll definitely do it again next

year!”

There it is—the spiritual analogy that has inspired this article. The CrossFit Open overflows with tests, just as our lives as Christ-loving men and women do. Entering the Open—or any athletic competition, for that matter—with a positive outlook and a humble spirit is analogous to facing life’s giants with faith and not fear, with humility and not pride. Whether they are spiritual or physical, challenges have the potential to make us stronger individuals, fit to run the next race harder, faster, more confidently and with more endurance *if we consider them “[opportunities] for great joy.”*

“If we desire our faith to be strengthened, we should not shrink from opportunities where our faith may be tried, and therefore, through trial, be strengthened.” –George Mueller

Stay fit, stay faithful.

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House’s Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman’s Guide to Total Fitness* and her latest book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [www.dianataylor.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Twitter.

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

Jody Burkeen: Do You Fear Sin?

Every day I begin my devotion in **prayer**. I ask God to clear my conscience so I can bask in the wisdom of His words. After

reading the **Word**, I begin to go into a deep prayer and then write that prayer in my prayer journal. This journal has all of my thanks, all of my requests and all of my sin.

Each day, I write down my sins and ask for forgiveness. I try to remind myself not to commit that sin again. But yet it seems I am asking for forgiveness for the same sin again and again and again—not every day, but way too often.

But what would happen if people were to announce my sin or your sin? What if your sins were posted on the Internet or TV or newspaper? More than likely you would become fearful of that sin.

“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning” (1 Tim. 5:20, NASB).

Timothy talks about this very thing. He reminds the leaders of the church that if any one of the elders are caught up in sin, they should confront them in a confidential manner. But if that person were to continue to sin, they should make it public. The point of making it public is to scare anyone else who might think it's OK to sin and hopefully make people fearful to even commit a sin in the first place.

So I ask, do you fear sin? Are you so scared of sin that you avoid it? Most of us don't.

But let me give you two ways to avoid a particular sin in your life. First, there's accountability. Find someone you just tell your most secret sins to. Ask that person to hold you accountable and keep you from making that sin.

Second is to write down everyone in your life who would be affected by that sin if you were caught. If a sin in your life were made public today, how many people would it affect?

As a pastor, any sin that I commit has so many ramifications

that I try hard not to allow myself the opportunity to get into a bad situation. I know I am weak and would be easily led astray. So I stay in the Word, pray and talk to my accountability partner on a regular basis. Don't fall into Satan's trap. You can't do this alone. You need help from God and friends.

God bless, and share your faith.

Jody Burkeen *is founder of Man Up God's Way Ministries, birthed out of his desire to help change the way Christian men "do" Christianity.*

Learning to Decipher the Rhetoric in Israel

One of Israel's staunchest allies, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, recently visited the Jewish state and expressed great solidarity between the two countries. The highlight of the very warm and friendly visit was his speech before the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, where he told Israel's leaders that Canada would stand behind them through "fire and water."

The Israeli Knesset is known for the occasional heckling and outbursts of its members, but for the first time in history, a foreign dignitary, Prime Minister Harper, was heckled by one of the Arab members of Knesset. Israel has several Arab political parties, and one of them is represented in the Knesset by Ahmad Tibi, who is known for voicing anti-Israel views. Tibi reacted to Harper's pro-Israel speech by shouting at him about Israeli discrimination of Arabs and then walking out of the hall.

Due to the immense media coverage of the incident, another Tibi outburst that day received attention. Earlier that morning he had heckled Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the incident provides a clear example of the use of exaggeration and lies in order to make a case against Israel.

Lies Work

When Tibi shouted at Israel's prime minister, he exclaimed that his fellow Arab member of the Knesset, Taleb Abu Arar, did not have water or electricity in his home because of Israeli discrimination. "There's no water or electricity in his village," Tibi shouted at Netanyahu. "No water, no electricity. Give him water and electricity and he'll stop shouting."

Tibi's lies were uncovered when Israeli Channel 2 News showed that Abu Arar, a former schoolteacher and head of his local council, lives in a three-story home with water, electricity, air conditioning and a satellite dish, and that his street is well-lit by street lamps. Prime Minister Netanyahu posted on his Facebook page a picture of Abu Arar's three-story home with proof that it has both electricity and water.

When confronted with this information, Tibi acknowledged that he had been speaking more generally about alleged discrimination. Obviously, the facts were not important to Tibi. Nevertheless, his outburst got so much media attention that he has been invited to Canada to speak at anti-Israel forums across the country. If impact is the goal, lies work!

Reading Behind the Words

This incident highlights the problem that Western diplomats and foreign workers have when engaging the Middle East. The Western means of communication is radically different from the Arab or Middle-Eastern use of words. Therefore, the two societies arrive at truth quite differently.

The Western world takes a more linear and logical approach to things and uses words to convey fact. Fact can be delivered in less direct language, if necessary, to not offend or upset someone, but by in large, words are used to convey fact rather than emotion. So conversation in Western societies is to be taken at face value. Yes means yes, and no means no.

In the Arab world, however, words are used more for their impact than for their factual accuracy. Arabic is a beautiful and flowery language that lends itself to powerful poetry and rhetoric more moving than music. Language is an art, and in that context, great exaggeration can be employed to make a point more impacting. The emotional impact of one's words is what is important, not the facts.

Therefore, in the Middle East, one does not take words at face value but arrives at the truth by reading behind the words. This requires skillful probing and the sifting of emotions in order to determine the facts.

Deciphering the Rhetoric

This is one of the reasons Israel is facing a mounting global propaganda campaign that is unprecedented in history. Israel's enemies, in complete disregard for the facts, have found a politically correct way to defeat her by branding her a racist, apartheid regime that should not be recognized or legitimized.

Tibi learned from his former boss, Yasser Arafat, who shocked President Clinton during the Camp David peace talks when he denied that the Jewish temple was ever in Jerusalem. Current Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is not any better. He not only denies the Holocaust happened but stood in front of the United Nations last year and denied the historical and biblical ties of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.

The West must learn to decipher this rhetoric to arrive at the

facts. For example, while Tibi intended to paint Israel as a racist state, Netanyahu boasted on his Facebook page that Tibi's heckling was proof of the vibrancy of Israeli democracy.

Now, that is the truth!

Susan Michael is U.S. director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and creator of .

New Guidelines May Take Millions Off Blood-Pressure Meds

About 5.8 million American adults may no longer be prescribed drugs to treat high blood pressure under recently revised guidelines, according to a new study.

In February, the Eighth Joint National Committee released controversial guidelines that relaxed blood pressure goals in adults 60 and older from 140/90 to 150/90. The guidelines also eased blood-pressure targets for adults with diabetes and kidney disease.

In this study, researchers used blood-pressure data collected from more than 16,000 Americans between 2005 and 2010 to assess the impact of the revised guidelines.

The proportion of adults considered eligible for medication to treat high blood pressure would fall from about 41 percent to 32 percent, the authors concluded in the study published online March 29 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and presented Saturday at the American College of

Cardiology annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

The researchers also said that 13.5 million adults—most of them older than 60—who were considered to have poorly controlled blood pressure would now be viewed as having adequately managed blood pressure. That includes 5.8 million adults who would no longer require blood pressure pills.

“The new guidelines do not address whether these adults should still be considered as having hypertension,” study lead author Ann Marie Navar-Boggan, a cardiology fellow at Duke University School of Medicine, said in a Duke news release. “But they would no longer need medication to lower their blood pressure.”

One in four adults older than 60 currently receives treatment for high blood pressure, according to the researchers.

“These adults would be eligible for less intensive blood pressure medication under the new guidelines, particularly if they were experiencing side effects,” Navar-Boggan says. “But many experts fear that increasing blood pressure levels in these adults could be harmful.”

Even under the new guidelines, about 28 million U.S. adults still have uncontrolled high blood pressure, and more than half of them don't receive treatment, says Navar-Boggan, who notes that uncontrolled high blood pressure is a risk factor for heart attack and stroke.

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