

# Netanyahu to Obama: 'Israel Wants Peace, Not a Piece of Paper'

Against the backdrop of a snowstorm that shut down Washington and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House on Monday.

Before the meeting, Netanyahu said that the people of Israel expect him "to stand strong against criticism, against pressure, stand strong to secure the future of the one and only Jewish state."

In an interview with Bloomberg View columnist Jeffrey Goldberg published this weekend, Obama warned of a "bleak future" for Israel if a peace agreement with the Palestinians is not reached. At the White House on Monday, Obama had a less dire tone.

"It is still possible to create two states, a Jewish state of Israel and a state of Palestine, with people living side by side in peace and security," Obama said. "But it's difficult. It requires compromise on all sides."

"We do not have a closer friend or ally than Israel, and the bond between our two countries and our two peoples is unbreakable," Obama said.

Netanyahu thanked Obama for working closely with Israel on "critically important issues" during his time as president.

"We're deeply grateful for that," Netanyahu said.

Netanyahu called on the Palestinians to recognize Israel as the Jewish state.

He said, "Mr. President, you rightly said that Israel, the Jewish state, is the realization of the Jewish people's self-determination in our ancestral homeland. So the Palestinians expect us to recognize a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people, a nation state for the Palestinian people. I think it's about time they recognize a nation state for the Jewish people. We've only been there for 4,000 years."

"In the Middle East, which is definitely the most turbulent and violent part of the earth, the only peace that will endure is a peace that we can defend," Netanyahu said.

"I know this flies in the face of conventional wisdom, but it's the truth," he continued. "What we all want fervently is peace. Not a piece [of] paper ... but a real peace, a peace that is anchored in mutual recognition of two nation states that recognize and respect one another, and solid security arrangements on the ground."

Netanyahu said he hoped Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas takes "Israel's genuine security needs" seriously.

"The 20 years that have passed since Israel entered the peace process have been marked by unprecedented steps that Israel has taken to advance peace," he said. "I mean, we vacated cities in Judea and Samaria. We left entirely Gaza. We've not only frozen settlements, we've uprooted entire settlements. We've released hundreds of terrorist prisoners, including dozens in recent months.

"And when you look at what we got in return, it's been scores of suicide bombings, thousands of rockets on our cities fired from the areas we vacated, and just incessant Palestinian incitement against Israel. So Israel has been doing its part, and I regret to say that the Palestinians haven't."

Speaking about the Iranian nuclear issue, Obama assured Netanyahu of his "absolute commitment to make sure that Iran

does not have a nuclear weapon." Netanyahu called preventing an Iranian nuclear weapon "the greatest challenge" facing Israel and the U.S.

Most of Monday's meeting took place behind closed doors, with only advisers in attendance. Netanyahu was accompanied by National Security Adviser Yossi Cohen. While Netanyahu called for Obama to put pressure on the Palestinians to make certain concessions, Obama wanted to know what Netanyahu was willing to compromise on. According to officials in Netanyahu's entourage, Obama intends to push the peace talks forward by presenting an American compromise to Abbas when they meet at the White House later this month.

Earlier on Monday, Netanyahu met with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. Netanyahu also met with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and Congress members.

Netanyahu will address the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference in Washington on Tuesday, before flying to Los Angeles.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew, an Orthodox Jew considered to be one of Obama's closest advisers, addressed the conference on Monday, saying, "The American-Israel relationship has not been a Democratic cause or a Republican cause; it has been an American cause."

Opposition Leader MK Isaac Herzog (Labor) spoke at the conference on Monday and called on Netanyahu to "move boldly toward peace."

Justice Minister Tzipi Livni (Hatnuah) also addressed the conference on Monday, but her speech was closed to the media.

On Monday night, Kerry told the conference that the U.S. "will not let the West Bank turn into another Gaza."

"Israel's security is our first priority," Kerry said.

On Iran, Kerry said, “We will not permit Iran to obtain nuclear weapon. Period.”

Kerry said that “no deal is better than a bad deal” with Iran and that the Obama administration would support imposing further sanctions on Iran if negotiations fail.

Speaking at the conference, U.S. Sen. John McCain criticized the Obama administration’s response to the crisis in Ukraine. According to McCain, the current “feckless foreign policy” has led to nobody believing in America’s strength.

*For the original article, visit .*

---

## **The Word: Breakfast of Fighters**

Men, we are at war—an epic spiritual battle. With every sunrise, a new threat awaits.

Unforeseen bombs will be lobbed our way. Fiery darts will be aimed at our character. Other weapons are fashioned to blast our armor. Organized legions are positioned to break through our walls.

You and I are fighting the good fight of faith. Since this is one fight you simply cannot afford to lose today without grave consequences, the question becomes one of health—your spiritual health.

So, let’s start with breakfast, shall we? How do you load up to win?

I’m not talking about a carb load. I’m talking about the

“bread of life” and the “living water” that deliver first food to a man of God both for short-term power and long-term rewards.

I think many of us fall into a morning routine that starts with jolt of caffeine, reviewing Facebook posts and scanning the news. We can easily overlook the battle being waged while we bury our nose in the sports pages. Is that feeding your mind and spirit with proper preparation and spiritual nutrition to face an antagonistic culture, a deceptive flesh and a seasoned enemy?

In Colossians 3, we get a glimpse of how to live and what to focus on, to “set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (vv. 1-2, NIV). (The rest of the chapter offers practical advice as well.)

Men, we need to recalibrate how we think and establish the correct vision for the day. And it starts in the morning. That’s how Jesus did it. That’s how David did it. That’s how we should do it.

If focusing on Jesus, “seeking first the kingdom of God,” is truly our top priority in our life, then we need to put Him first in our day. After all, it’s a privilege to meet with the Creator of the universe, the Savior of our souls and the Lord of life. So, here’s the how, who, what, where, when and why to eat the breakfast of champions:

## **How**

When we wake up, we need to develop a ravishing hunger and thirst for God.

- “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God” (Ps. 42:1-2, ESV).

## **Who**

It's counterintuitive to think of "who" to eat. But Jesus said if we feed and drink of Him, we will not hunger or thirst—both metaphors for spiritual nutrition for our souls.

- "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty'" (John 6:35, NIV).
- "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me to drink" (John 7:37, ESV).

## **What**

Our morning routine should begin with reading the Bible and praying. You may also review daily devotionals that provide added interpretation and application from the Word of God.

- "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4, NKJV).

Then, in Luke 11, Jesus taught us what to pray for and the related promise that God listens:

- "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (vv. 9-10, NIV).

## **When**

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. When we rise up, we should set our hearts and minds "on things above," expecting God's presence in our lives, before focusing on our agendas, to-dos and relationships.

- "Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul" (Ps. 143:8, ESV).
- "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises

to your name, O Most High, to declare your steadfast love in the morning" (Ps. 92:1-2).

- "O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch" (Ps. 5:3).

## **Where**

Prayer is simply talking to God about whatever is on your mind. Ask Him for help, and share your burdens honestly, even angrily. Therefore, you may want to retreat to a location free from eavesdroppers, distractions and temptations.

- "And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed" (Mark 1:35).
- "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16, NIV).

## **Why**

A morning started with the breakfast of champions is a morning that's recalibrated, prepared for the battles ahead and for a future in heaven.

- "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. ... Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:54, 58).

Finally, we need our Wheaties to be armed for the spiritual battle. I suggest reviewing and praying this Scripture every morning:

- "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God,

so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people" (Eph. 6:10-18).

**Kenny Luck**, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, 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 .

---

## Muslim Journalist Compares Holy Land to Nazi Germany

In an interview conducted at the beginning of this year, Dr. Stephen Sizer, one of Israel's harshest critics, doesn't even flinch at his interviewer's outlandish suggestion. At 12:18 in the interview (see below), Hassan Alkatib asks Sizer, "Do you think, eh, Theodore Herzl was inspired, maybe, by the idea of, eh, Nazi Germany of having, you know, a country just for one race?"

Now, for those of you who may not know, Theodore Herzl is considered to be the father of modern-day Zionism—the movement that led to the birth of Israel. Just before the turn of the 20th century, as a response to Jewish persecution around the world, he wrote a book called *The Jewish State* stating that Jews would never be safe at the hands of other nations and therefore needed their own nation to survive. Hassan Alkatib suggests that this man was inspired by the Nazis!

Sizer's response is even more shocking than the question. We would expect an honest historian and respected (in some circles) theologian like Dr. Sizer to 1) take off his mic and leave the interview, 2) scream, "What did you just say?" or 3) at least correct the interviewer on his sickening suggestion.

Instead, Sizer completely ignores the comments and continues to make his case against Israel and Christian Zionists. This is not shocking, as Sizer believes that Israel is the biggest deterrent to Arabs receiving the gospel. His passion is going to Muslims and sharing with them about the evils of Israel and deception of Christian Zionism in hopes that he can reach them. Islam is not the problem, but rather the Jews and the Christians who love them.

What is so ironic is that just about an hour after watching this interview, I read this article reporting that Syrian Christians in the northern city of Raqqa have been forced to sign a treaty with their new al-Qaida rulers or "face the sword." Under the agreement:

"The Christians agreed to a list of conditions: to abstain from renovating churches or monasteries in Raqqa; not to display crosses or religious symbols in public or use loudspeakers in prayer; not to read scripture indoors loud enough for Muslims standing outside to hear; not to undertake subversive actions against Muslims; not to carry out any religious ceremonies outside the church; not to prevent any Christian wishing to convert to Islam from doing so; to

respect Islam and Muslims and say nothing offensive about them; to pay the jizya tax ... and to dress modestly.”

How is this the fault of the Zionists?

We could talk about the oppression of moderate Muslims and Christians by Hamas in Gaza or the murdering of scores of Egyptian (Coptic) Christians by Islamic fanatics. In Benghazi, Libya, Islamists recently went door to door asking people if they were Christian or Muslim. The Christians got a bullet in the head. Somehow, according to Sizer’s logic, this is not an Islamic but Israeli problem.

In my following of Sizer, I have never heard him even offer a critical word regarding Islam, the PLO or Hamas. But he will go to Iran as a Christian pastor and meet with Muslim radicals—leaders of one of the most oppressive regimes on earth—and spew out falsehoods regarding Israel and her Christian friends.

Nazis? Really?

Getting back to the comment Sizer refused to refute—that the father of the nation of Israel may have drawn inspiration from the Nazis to create the nation of Israel. He is saying that because Israel is a Jewish state for the Jewish people, it bears semblance to Hitler’s desire for an all-Aryan master race.

Indeed the U.N. agreed. In 1975 they declared that Zionism is a racist ideology. But just so the disturbing declaration doesn’t hang out there in cyberspace, let’s address it:

1. I am going to assume that Hassan is not a great student of history but is more influenced by Islamic rhetoric and propaganda. Nevertheless, he should know that Adolf Hitler was a mere tyke when Herzl began to formulate his ideas. Herzl presented his vision for a Jewish State in 1897, while the Nazi’s came to power in 1933.

2. It seems highly unlikely that the most anti-Semitic movement in the history of the world would have inspired the man who proposed the Jewish state *because* of anti-Semitism. It was the persecution of the *Jewish* French army officer Alfred Dreyfus that pushed Herzl over the top, and he realized that there is no hope for the Jewish people in foreign nations. The Nazis were not an example of what he hoped to create, but the *reason* he hoped to create it!

3. Hitler was looking for a master race to rule the world. The Jews simply wanted to survive. All across Eastern Europe, Jews were being persecuted. While the creation of Israel was a fulfillment of prophecy, most of the founders were simply seeking survival.

4. Hitler's land expansion was part of his plan to take over Europe. Israel's land expansion has been part of her survival. If the Arab nations had signed a peace agreement with Israel in 1948 and lived up to it, Israel would still be at her (suicidal) pre-1967 borders. Arab aggression—not Israeli imperialism—has led to Israel's present borders.

Trying to make a connection between Israel's birth and the Nazi plan for Europe is possibly the most immoral, insensitive ideology, considering that Hitler's Final Solution was to kill every Jew in Europe. But despite the fact that it has no intellectual merit in logic or history, Hassan Alkatib repeats the lie—that he has, no doubt, been taught in his mosque, while born-again Christian, Stephen Sizer remains silent in order to continue with his dishonest anti-Israel propaganda.

**Ron Cantor** is the director of *Messiah's Mandate International in Israel*, a Messianic ministry dedicated to taking the message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cantor also travels internationally teaching on the Jewish roots of the New Testament. He serves on the pastoral team of *Tiferet Yeshua*, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. His newest book, *Identity Theft*, was

*released April 16. Follow him at @RonSCantor on Twitter.*

*For the original article, visit .*

---

# How to Let Go and Let Our Children Grow

Putting faith and trust in our children that they will make the right decisions and take the correct actions is a difficult thing to do. We know they will not always do so. They are going to make preventable mistakes.

But is there another way to learn and grow? No. So as parents, we must let go and let them grow.

**1. Implement a new management style.** Since they were born, we have (out of necessity) been micromanaging our children's lives. It's time to change management style and allow them the room they need to mature. Begin the process of transferring decision-making into your child's hands.

**2. Give more responsibility.** One of life's big lessons is that nothing comes free. There is always some form of price to pay for each action. This is a lesson that has to be learned by experience. Perhaps make your child responsible for the insurance and gas for the car they are driving.

**3. Pray for them and with them.** Prayer is easily a parent's greatest asset. Pray for them when alone, pray for them in small groups, and pray for them in church. Most importantly, pray together with them, coming from a place where both parent and child are God's children. A child that will bend his knees alongside his dad is most likely going to hold himself

accountable to those prayers.

See also:

“10 Ways to Pray for and with Your Child”

“A Father’s Prayer”

**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 .

---

## 2 Questions to Destroy Food Strongholds

A lady wrote me on to ask for help because she is dealing with overeating made two statements that showed me what the problem is:

“Food ... is something that I have not been able to overcome. Food still controls me.”

When I read those two things, it was clear to me that she is dealing with a mental stronghold, which is rooted in false beliefs. But praise God that strongholds are meant to be torn down!

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-6 NKJV).

I asked her two questions to help her uncover any fears behind the stronghold. If you are dealing with a similar situation, then you may want to ask yourself:

1. What does my life look like when food is no longer the focus?
2. What am I afraid will happen when food binging is no longer an issue?

I asked her to get a pen and a piece of paper and write down the answers to those two questions, being prayerful the whole time. I asked her to write me back and let me know what she learns.

The purpose of the first question is to let you know if you can even see yourself having a healthy relationship with food. Some people have practiced their eating patterns for so long that they can't imagine living without them.

The second question helps you see if there are any fears holding you back. A saying goes, “An intolerable situation will exist in your life as long as you are willing to tolerate it.”

In other words: As long as you can live with it, you will.

That is human nature. You may be unhappy in your situation, but if you are not doing anything to change it, then you have learned to live with being unhappy.

It is only when a burning desire comes alive within you and you make a decision that you want better that will you start working for better. You will be willing to invest in whatever

time and wisdom it takes to have better.

I pray these questions help you to start your process for tearing down mental strongholds. I recommend meditating on this scripture today: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1).”

*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.*

---

## **Fight for Your Marriage, Not Your Pride**

In Tony and Lauren Dungy’s newest book, *Uncommon Marriage*, they look back on the challenging time when they were building their dream house together. Making sure all the details were lining up just right between the builders and contractors led to moments of tension in their marriage.

Coach Dungy writes, “During this time, we were reminded that sometimes it’s best to apologize even when we don’t think we caused the disagreement. When that happened, one of us would choose to say, ‘I love you. Now let’s move forward.’ That’s not easy to do, especially when emotions have gotten heated. It goes against our human nature, but it works when minor disagreements crop up.”

Following Coach Dungy’s example, here are three steps to take when you and your spouse stumble upon moments of conflict:

**1. Identify what the conflict is really about.** It's important that you and your spouse recognize together what the conflict is. If you become upset when your husband is late for dinner again, the root of your anger may be that you feel your husband has higher priorities than spending time with you.

Be sure to communicate the conflict for what it truly is, not just what it appears to be on the surface. Only then can it be worked at and resolved. If you keep having the same old marriage fights, identifying what the conflict is really about will help keep conflict at bay.

**2. Realize what is worth fighting for.** Like Coach Dungy writes, our human nature longs to be right in everything—no matter how insignificant the issue. But when it comes to arguments with your spouse, be sure you have a clear mind to understand what's worth fighting for. Is it more important to fight about whose turn it was to wash the dishes? Or to show love to your spouse by cleaning the dishes regardless of whose turn it was? Fight for your marriage, not your pride.

**3. Come back in love.** Instead of resolving to give your spouse the silent treatment when an issue seems impossible to solve, I encourage you to instead treat them with love. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter who was right or wrong. What does matter is that you chose to take the high road, ask for forgiveness and let them know how much you love them. Giving forgiveness can be challenging, but it is the best way to come back in love.

What are some insignificant conflicts in your marriage that you need to let go of in order to love your spouse well? We would like to hear your story in a comment below.

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

---

# German Chancellor: Iran More Than Simply a Threat to Israel

Germany views Iran as a potential threat not just to Israel, but also to European countries, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Tuesday at a news conference in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

“We see the threat not just as a threat for the state of Israel but as a general threat for Europe as well,” Merkel said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli and German government ministers met for a joint cabinet meeting as part of a daylong series of meetings between the governments of both countries to improve bilateral relations and discuss regional developments.

“We meet through turbulent times. There’s a great convulsion that is taking place between the straits of Gibraltar and the Khyber Pass,” Netanyahu said. “Everything seems to be shaking, convulsing, changing, yet I would say that Israel is an island of stability, security and prosperity in this sea of instability.”

Merkel arrived in Israel on Monday for a two-day visit, accompanied by 16 ministers. This is the fifth time the Israeli and German governments have met, and this year marks 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On Monday evening, Merkel dined with Netanyahu at his official residence in Jerusalem. Prior to their meal, Merkel said she is “interested in seeing two states for two peoples in a final

[peace] agreement—a Jewish state and a Palestinian state.”

Merkel said Germany and Israel have “a very strong friendship, which ties our two countries together, and a friendship that we want to continue to develop further.”

Netanyahu told Merkel, “Our nations share tragedy and hope, great friendship and cooperation.”

“Of course, the people of Israel want a real peace, a peace that ends the conflict and finally gets the Palestinians to recognize the Jewish state,” Netanyahu said.

The dinner Netanyahu and Merkel shared was prepared by leading Israel chef Moshe Segev, and the meal was accompanied by Merkel’s preferred Israeli wines. Sara Netanyahu presented Merkel with a silver and turquoise necklace.

Netanyahu and Merkel met on Tuesday to discuss the Iranian nuclear issue as well as the peace negotiations. Germany is one of the world powers negotiating a final nuclear deal with Iran. Netanyahu was expected to ask Merkel to ensure the Iranians are no longer able to enrich uranium.

Meanwhile, the visiting German ministers met with their Israeli counterparts to sign a series of agreements. Among others, they signed agreements on cooperation in foreign relations, including one that will allow Israelis traveling in Germany for a six-month period to work there. The ministers also signed economic cooperation agreements, trade and energy agreements, agreements for cooperation on projects in developing countries and for cooperation in the preservation of Tel Aviv’s Bauhaus architecture.

Representatives from both countries also discussed maritime security. Israel is interested in acquiring a German defense system for the gas rigs along the Israeli coast, in what would be a half-billion shekel (\$142 million) deal.

“Chancellor Merkel is a friend of Israel,” said Netanyahu Monday at the opening of a Likud faction meeting. “She takes stances against boycotts and against initiatives that threaten to boycott Israel.”

President Shimon Peres was to present Merkel with the Presidential Medal on Tuesday.

Merkel was expected to announce during her trip a new German law that will offer restitution to Holocaust survivors who worked in ghettos under Nazi control. The payments, amounting to some 200 euros (about \$275) monthly, will be offered to about 20,000 Holocaust survivors. Survivors who have had their claims for restitution rejected in the past will be eligible for retroactive payments from 1997 on, under the new law. Senior Citizens Minister Uri Orbach will help oversee implementation of the legislation.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman hosted the German ministers for dinner at the David Citadel Hotel in Jerusalem on Monday evening. At the beginning of the meal, Lieberman said the relationship between Germany and Israel contributes significantly to Israel’s cooperation with the European Union.

Only hours before Merkel’s arrival in Israel, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier condemned Israel’s settlement policy, calling Israeli construction in Judea and Samaria “disruptive” to peace efforts.

*For the original article, visit .*

---

# 5 Ways Fear Threatens Your Health

The title of this article may seem ironic to you. After all, it's doubtful the idea of fear threatening your health in five different ways is doing much to quiet the soul!

But nevertheless, I feel it necessary to shed some hard-hitting light on the health-stealing shadows of fear. After receiving this information—as unsettling as it may be—it's my prayer that we you will be motivated and better equipped to face each unpredictable day and unknowable night with steadfast faith and confidence in our Father's care for us.

Before His death, Jesus foretold about the end times that would signal His imminent return. Suffice it to say, the picture He painted is by no means rosy. On the contrary, a gray, grim dystopia is described as we read about the arrest, persecution and martyrdom of last-days believers. Corruption, violence and moral depravity will be even more widespread than they are today. News of war will make headlines every morning. Earthquakes and famine will occur more frequently and with an unthinkable intensity the world has never seen.

It doesn't matter whether you believe in a pre-, mid-, or post-tribulational rapture of the church—or no rapture at all. The fact remains that as the final return of Christ draws closer, the world grows more wicked.

With all the evil and hatred toward the truth of the gospel spreading like wildfire across the globe, our world has consequently become quite a frightening place to live. Recent tragedies such as the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012 remind us of the fragility and unpredictability of life. It would seem that just stepping out of our homes means taking a risk. Nowhere we

go is guaranteed to be 100 percent safe.

The scarier this world becomes, the more comfort promises like Psalm 91 (see below) bring to our souls. Those of us who have chosen to follow the Lord and accept Him as our refuge are supernaturally guarded from evil. (Feel free to let out a shout of praise God now—unless you're in public, in which case a soft, nondisruptive handclap is advised).

“If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go” (Ps. 91:9-11, NLT).

According to *Psychology Today*, fear is a “vital response to physical and emotional danger—if we didn't feel it, we couldn't protect ourselves from legitimate threats.” Because it is a basic survival mechanism that signals our bodies to respond to danger, it is an essential part of keeping us safe. An example of this is what we call our “gut instinct,” that is, the inexplicable “sixth sense,” if you will, that alerts us to predators and shady situations. I'm sure you can recall a few instances in which your gut nudged you to flee from an environment that just didn't feel quite right.

But while fear does serve a positive role when it comes to protecting us and our families from harm, it can also incapacitate us if we constantly dwell on threats, whether real or imagined. Here are five ways in which chronic, fear-filled thoughts can negatively impact your health:

**1. It can weaken your immune system.** The stress hormone cortisol weakens your immune system, and for good reason. During periods of intense fear or stress, such as in situations when your “gut instinct” is warning you of a predator, cortisol is trying to help reduce inflammation by weakening some of the antibodies that can increase inflammation. The hormone also turns on natural immunity (the

ability to fight off problems immediately) and moves resources away from specific immunities (the ability to prevent diseases your body knows how to control).

However, cortisol is only helpful in short bursts. When you are constantly stressed out or fearful, your body is needing T-cells and white blood cells, and unfortunately cortisol continues to suppress them, thus weakening your immune system over time. Granted, you still need to be in contact with germs and bacteria to become ill, but once you do, the road to recovery will likely be longer due to a weakened immune system.

**2. It can rapidly weaken your heart.** Research on a condition called stress cardiomyopathy, nicknamed “broken-heart syndrome” by doctors, is a condition in which intense emotional or physical stress can cause rapid and severe heart muscle weakness. This condition, according to Hopkins Medicine, “can occur following a variety of emotional stressors such as grief (e.g. death of a loved one), fear, extreme anger, and surprise.”

*Stress* refers to the body’s response to things it perceives as abnormal, ranging from physical abnormalities, such as high body temperature, to emotional ones, such the sudden death of a loved one. When these abnormalities occur, the body produces various hormones and proteins, such as adrenaline and noradrenaline, which are meant to help cope with the stress, such as quickly running away to escape danger.

With stress cardiomyopathy, it’s believed that the heart muscle is overwhelmed by a major dose of adrenaline that is produced suddenly in response to stress. While the precise way in which adrenaline affects the heart is unknown, it appears that, whatever the mechanism, the effects of adrenaline on the heart in this syndrome are temporary and completely reversible. However, Hopkins Medicine warns that stress cardiomyopathy “can be life threatening in some cases. ... The

good news is that this condition improves very quickly, so if patients are under the care of physicians familiar with this syndrome, even the most critically ill tend to make a quick and complete recovery.”

**3. It can cause gastrointestinal problems.** Anxiety is a reaction to fear and stress that affects us physically through the amygdala, a brain region that governs many intense emotional responses. Neurotransmitters carry the impulse to the sympathetic nervous system, causing the heart and breathing rates to increase, muscles to tense, and blood flow to divert from the abdominal organs to the brain.

In the short term, fear, as we’ve seen, prepares us to confront crises by alerting our bodies to danger. But its impact can be counterproductive, causing light-headedness, nausea, diarrhea and frequent urination.

**4. It can cause fatigue.** Fear creates tension that blocks the flow of internal energy. Prolonged or intense feelings of fear lead to the inability to respond fluidly to life’s challenges. Tension and rigidity also consume massive amounts of energy through constant effort. As an illustration, try clenching your fist and forearm for a couple of minutes and observe how much effort and energy is spent and wasted. Now imagine holding even just 10 percent of that tension for days or weeks throughout your body. This type of holding leads to full-blown exhaustion.

**5. It can cause depression.** First John 4:18 reads, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment” (KJV). The Greek word for *torment* used here is *kolasi*, which can mean “punishment.” When we live in fear, we are punishing our bodies with a depressed spirit. Depression, then, can lead to heart disease, diabetes, obesity, mental decline, substance abuse, cancer, pain and suicide.

The above verse states succinctly that love is the remedy for fear. "Perfect love" will result in security and peace, even in the midst of our darkest hours. The Greek word for *perfect*, used in the above verse, is *teleioj*, which means "complete"; "completeness of full age, man, perfect." When I consider this definition, perfect love, it seems, is not only a *what*, but also a *Who*.

When we direct our hearts and minds toward the One who loved us enough to give Himself for us, we are promised that He will "take great delight in [us]," "quiet [us] with His love," and "rejoice over [us] with singing" (Zeph. 3:17). We are reminded of the love, protection, prosperity, wellness and joy that can flow only from the rivers of His grace. We are healed of our blindness toward His omniscience and supernatural power, as Elisha's servant was in the following Old Testament story.

Elisha the prophet's servant rose one morning to see that he and his master were completely surrounded by the army of their enemies. The servant was, in today's vernacular, freaking out a little! Then Elisha said these awesome words:

"Don't be afraid! ... For there are more on our side than on theirs!" (2 Kings 6:16, NLT).

Perhaps Elisha could detect from a blank expression on his servant's face that it would take more than an enthusiastic pep talk to quell his fear, because what happens next is absolutely astonishing:

"Then Elisha prayed, 'O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!' The Lord opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire" (v. 17).

You might find this hard to believe, but Elisha's servant didn't witness anything out of the ordinary. Though we cannot see the heavenly realm, its heroic heralds or shining

soldiers, we can rest assured that they are indeed all around us as they were in biblical days; God has commanded them to be so (Ps. 91:10)!

What relief rises within our souls as we take a deep breath in and know that there is Someone greater than our parents, the government, our spouse and our own intelligence protecting us from harm. There is Someone stronger than health foods, the gym and modern medicine protecting us from illness. There is Someone more reliable than alarm systems, self-defense, and German shepherds protecting us from evildoers. That "Someone" is the Lord of the angel armies, the One who shouts at clouds to make it rain, tells ocean waves where they're to stop, commands the dawn to awaken earth and conducts the stars in their nightly symphony!

Take shelter in the Most High today, and you will find comfort in His everlasting promises.

**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*.

---

## **5 Reasons American Men Struggle to Find Their Purpose**

Many men I come across are depressed and have an inordinate desire to be fulfilled in sports by vicariously living their

lives through other men they set up as heroes. This is because in sports, there are clear winners and losers, thus satisfying a man's desire to conquer through mastering a skill.

Also, because these men feel purposeless, they need to live their lives through other men or through a team they can identify with, attempting to fill the void in their hearts.

Part of the reason we men struggle is because of the American cultural way we view manhood, which is based on an individualistic concept of destiny that we have embraced from the rugged individualism we have inherited from the likes of Thomas Jefferson. Also influential is the individualistic search for the perfect man or superman (e.g., Greek mythological heroes like Atlas) who conquers the world for good, a concept we have embraced in this country and see reflected in our movie heroes, like Superman, Batman, Daredevil and Spider-Man, all of which comes from Greek culture's influence on Western culture.

Adultery is another symptom of a man's boredom with himself, which comes from not having an overarching purpose that will guide his every decision.

In today's culture, there is an emphasis on one's nationality, with ethnic parades and ethnic academic studies, mainly because one's culture becomes the replacement for the lack of an overarching purpose that transcends this physical life. In my perspective, I am first a Christian, second an American (or Italian or Hispanic, etc.).

For us to understand how to biblically fulfill our purpose, we need to go to "Jerusalem" and read the Bible with the Hebraic mindset rather than interpret the world through "Athens" (the center of Greek culture 2,000 years ago and the center of apologetics with third-century Christian philosophers like Clement and Origen, who greatly influenced the church with a Greek view of the world).

The following are countercultural traits men need to have in order to fulfill their destiny:

**1. Men need to be team players.** Many men want their individual gifts to shine. But when it comes to fulfilling destiny, we have to be more like a basketball point guard, like Steve Nash of the Phoenix Suns or Magic Johnson of the old Los Angeles Lakers, rather than a professional golfer like Tiger Woods (golf, unlike life, is a one-person sport).

To be successful, men need to learn to leverage their lives by surrounding themselves with people who have strengths they don't have so they can compensate for their weaknesses. No one has all the gifts, wisdom, power, abilities and experience. God has stacked the deck in our lives a certain way so we are forced to depend on the "dream team" He has already given us, if we would just open our eyes of faith and find those team members.

First Corinthians 12:8 teaches that God has only given some a "word" of wisdom, another a "word" of knowledge; all we have as individuals are fragments. It takes a team that seeks God to have the whole picture by comparing notes and hearing and doing what the Spirit is saying.

**2. Men need to walk in corporate destiny in order to fulfill their individual destiny.** In American culture, we glorify action heroes like John Wayne and Rambo, who single-handedly walk into deadly situations and turn things around. But in real life, Rambo dies as soon as he falls out of the helicopter, like when he was rescuing the POWs in *Rambo II*, and John Wayne gets shot to death when he walks into a bar and attempts to take out 10 armed men.

Only those who connect to a local church or some corporate body can actually fulfill their destiny because the Bible was written to a nation (Old Testament) and to the city churches (New Testament). In the Jewish mindset, it was unthinkable to

be outside the camp and walk in God's promises. In Numbers 12:14, we see how being outside the camp was a sign of a curse, yet there are approximately 40 million American Christians attempting to serve God without connecting to a local church.

This would be as foolish as someone thinking they could go to Iraq and defeat terrorists on their own. James 4:7 and Ephesians 6:10-18 were admonitions for the local church—not just individuals—to resist the devil. Men must get to a place where they lay their extreme individualism aside in order to fulfill the mandate God has given the body of Christ. Jesus did not die merely for an individual but for His church, and it is only through His church that we can fully see our purpose fulfilled. What a far cry from the preaching we hear that emphasizes individual destiny and vision!

**3. Men need to be vulnerable to other men and expose their weaknesses.** Many American and Western men have a hard time showing their emotions or admitting when they have a weakness. It is almost unmanly to cry or admit that you cannot do something.

In regard to showing emotions, the greatest man that ever lived, Jesus Christ, was a person totally in touch with His emotions. In John 11:35, Jesus openly and profusely wept; in Mark 1:41, He was moved with pity; in Mark 3:5, He looked at people with anger; in Luke 10:21, He was filled with joy; and in John 12:27 and Matthew 26:38, He spoke about His soul (emotions) being exceedingly sorrowful.

Men need to learn that being in touch with and expressing their emotions actually makes them more capable as men instead of less of a man.

Also, wise men know they need accountable relationships so they can receive counsel from others and also encouragement to continue moving forward. Building and experiencing covenant

among men who are vulnerable to each other in trusting relationships is one of the primary keys that will enable a man to persevere in his purpose. It was a liberating thing when I came to Christ and He began to show me that He has assigned others to me that will both minister to me and aid me when I am weak. I have noticed that those who isolated themselves when they began to struggle are no longer in the faith that I have kept by His grace for over 30 years.

#### **4. Men need to honor aged men for their wisdom and experience.**

The Bible teaches us to rise in the presence of the aged (Lev. 19:32). In the East, they seem to honor older people, but in American culture, the marketing for most products and television shows is for folks between the ages of 18 to 35 (except for pharmaceutical ads) because in this nation we glorify three things: sex, power and glamour. Older men are even encouraged by their peers to quit working and retire to Florida and spend the rest of their lives playing golf and watching television.

This mindset is even embedded in city and federal jobs in some places. I was recently with a man who was forced to retire from the New York Police Department just because he reached the age of 62, even though he was healthy and on the force for more than 35 years and had a wealth of experience to share with the younger men and women in blue.

Biblically speaking, the older you get, the more of God you understand and the more experience you have to share with others. In the Bible, there is no such thing as retirement! God showed me years ago that my greatest ministry is actually going to start when I turn 65. I am looking forward to old age because I am looking forward to the greatest years of my life in regard to the impact I will have on this world. American men need to surround themselves with older men they can respect and honor so they can build upon their shoulders and do even better instead of disdaining them and setting them aside.

**5. Men need to have a purpose they are willing to die for instead of living a life of indulgence.** Men who have no purpose in life tend to indulge themselves with the lusts of the flesh and are the most miserable of all people. I have found my greatest joy is when I finish work the Lord has given me for a particular task. Then when I relax, I am filled with a euphoric spiritual feeling that is greater than any physical pleasure (John 17:4).

All men were born with an innate desire to nurture and protect their families, empower the helpless, and die for a cause greater than themselves. Those who are missing even one of these elements in their lives will walk around depressed due to feeling a lack of inner fulfillment or will be addicted to some pleasure because they are attempting to medicate themselves to drown out the powerful voice of God calling them to fulfill their vocation in life.

I pray that all who read this commit to following all of the God-given mandates in their lives and, like Jesus, glorify the Lord, having completed the work He gave them to do.

*Joseph Mattera is overseeing bishop of Resurrection Church, Christ Covenant Coalition, in Brooklyn, N.Y.*

---

## **Are You ‘Manning Up’ in Your Marriage?**

As you walk into churches today, you see many of the programs and ministry outreach efforts performed by ... women. In some cases, these same women are also the head of the household, raising kids, paying bills and sometimes bringing home the bacon. The biblical model that God gave us—that men should be

the leaders in the church and home—is not being followed by many Christian men today.

Countless married Christian men have become spiritual sissies. These men have their tail between their legs, and their wives have them by the collar. Many of these men have allowed their wives to call all the shots, and they just follow her around like a lost puppy waiting for the next treat. In many cases, it's not because the wife wants to act this way but because she doesn't have the choice: Her husband isn't stepping up.

Don't get me wrong: I am not being a chauvinist with these statements. Women have a major role to play in God's kingdom and the home, and they are equally gifted in many areas of ministry. As a matter of fact, the Bible gives us many examples of women God used mightily for His kingdom.

But unfortunately, this has become the stereotypical view of Christian men today: whipped like dogs and too frail to stand up for their God, their family or their marriage. Men need to bronze themselves and *man up*.

### **The Picture of a Spiritually Sissy Husband**

When I was married in 1990, my wife was far more mature than I ever thought about being. Some might say she still is. But since I became a Christian in 2003, our roles have reversed.

During the first 13 years of our marriage, my wife was raising me. I mean that in the sense of the way you raise a child. She always had to mold me, scold me and hold me, just like a kid. And I came to the point where I actually liked it.

The day before I got married, my mom made my bed. The day after I got married, my wife made it. I had just gone from one mom to the other. I was the biggest sissy around. My wife was my mom, not my soulmate. She spent many years training me to become a man. It didn't work too well because that isn't the biblical model, and I think over time she finally stopped

trying and just let go.

In the early years of our marriage, when people asked us about having kids, I would jokingly say, "She has to raise me first." What I later realized was that it wasn't a joke. Not a good way to be a biblical husband.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Eph. 5:25–31).

After I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I began to read what the Bible says about being a good Christian husband. What I found was that I wasn't even close to the biblical model, and neither were most of the men I'd met in church.

But reading about what kind of husband I needed to be and actually doing it were two different things. I had 13 years of bad habits to get rid of—an old, comfortable routine. I had a wife to convince that I had changed, and I had to close my ears to Satan telling me I couldn't do it. This, so far, has been the biggest challenge for me in my Christian walk.

In my marriage, I had made a lot of mistakes. I had let my wife down more than once. So for me to start trying to assert my newfound "spiritual head of the household" attitude ... well, it was going to take a long time, a lot of prayer and actions that were much different than what I had shown in the past. As she has always said, "Actions speak louder than words."

My wife had spent our marriage providing the majority of the

income. She had moved up in the ranks as a pharmaceutical saleswoman in the largest company in the industry.

She was successful, beautiful and confident, and she was fast becoming the No. 1 salesperson in the company. This was something I was proud of but also very jealous of. The jealousy part is something I didn't bring up very often.

But after having kids, my wife's job began to suffer. We had a full-time live-in nanny while we both worked, but the thought of leaving her children with another woman became just too painful for my wife, and it began to affect her attitude at work.

On top of all this, for the first time in our lives, we were listening to the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to direct our lives. What He was telling us to do was a hard pill for me to swallow. God was telling my wife she needed to stay at home with our kids.

This was not something I felt like we needed to do—not because God wasn't talking to me too, but because I was not ready for this kind of change. All I was worried about was the money, the lifestyle and having to step up and be the man of the house.

If God is calling you to do something, no matter how far-fetched, He will see you through it. It won't be without trial or without error, but He will see you through to the end.

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2–4).

## **God Spoke**

After fighting through the conflict and after I was eventually

convicted by God that my wife did need to stay home with the kids, she quit her job, and we haven't looked back since.

Although there have been trials and tribulations in our life, it was the best thing we have done to date. As I said earlier, God will get you through the bad times if He called you to it.

Look at Paul. After God called him on the road to Damascus, he spent many years in prison, faced death and stoning, and was shipwrecked. But he followed God's call, and this is what he said near the end of his life: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

God's plan for your life may not turn out as you want it to, but whose plan would you rather live—yours or His? Keep fighting the good fight.

After listening to God, my wife quit her job to stay home, and God began to do a mighty work in both of us. For my wife, it was to start letting me take over as head of the household, both spiritually and financially. For me, it was becoming the man God intended me to be. We both dug into Scripture to figure out what it was we were to do. Through this process we have had ups and downs, but thus far, God has been faithful to us.

*The preceding is an excerpt from **Jody Burkeen's** book, Man Up: Becoming a Godly Man in an Ungodly World. You can purchase the eBook [here](#). Jody is the founder of Man Up God's Way Ministries, birthed out of his desire to help change the way Christian men "do" Christianity. He is also a regular columnist for .*